
C O S M O P O L I S

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Work Tsar Status Report

as of March 24, 2002

by Joel Riedesel

The Volumes for Wave 1 are now defined! And the texts for them have all completed the TI process and are in the Composition and Post Proofing system!

The Wave 1 volumes are:

- V1) *Mazirian the Magician*
- V4) *The Rapparee*
 - Big Planet*
 - Vandals of the Void*
- V6) *Golden Girl and Other Stories*
- V7) *Gold and Iron*

- Clarges*
- The Languages of Pao*
- V9) *The Dragon Masters and Other Stories*
- V10) *The Flesh Mask*
 - Strange People, Queer Notions*
 - Bird Isle*
- V11) *The House on Lily Street*
 - The View from Chickweed's Window*
- V12) *Bad Ronald*
 - The Dark Ocean*
- V14) *The Man in the Cage*
 - The Deadly Isles*
- V17) *The Moon Moth and Other Stories*
- V20) *Emphyrio*
- V25) *The Face*
- V26) *The Book of Dreams*

- V28) *The Domains of Koryphon*
- V29) *Trullion: Alastor 2262*
- V30) *Marune: Alastor 933*
- V31) *Wyst: Alastor 1716*
- V36) *Suldrun's Garden*
- V37) *The Green Pearl*
- V38) *Madouc*
- V39) *Araminta Station*
- V42) *Night Lamp*

The word count for these volumes is 2,356,600 words. Approximately 900,000 to 1,000,000 words remain to be Post Proofed for Wave 1—and by the end of May or first week of June no less! The seven Post Proofing teams deserve many accolades!

There are only seventeen texts remaining to be Post Proofed in Wave 1. The VIE is now putting the final processes in place for readying the texts for publication. The next two months are a push to finish the Composition process. We then scrutinize every volume before sending them on to Sfera for 'blue lines'. Those are then checked. Finally the volumes are ready to publish. We anticipate the go ahead to Sfera for publication as early as the end of July. Look for Wave 1 volumes before Christmas (and keep your fingers crossed!).

Meanwhile, Wave 2 already proceeds at a heady clip. Already, the majority of Wave 2 texts have completed DD OCR scanning (only 39 OCR scans remain to be completed). The Jockeying, Monkeying, Techno, and TI steps have all been filled with outstanding work. Yet, diligence must be attended to. There is much work left to do and we will still be needing volunteers to help with most all of the phases of work yet to do. If anyone would like to volunteer for VIE work, see the VIE web pages or feel free to contact myself at joel@ourstillwaters.org and I will point you in the right direction.

VIE Brochures from the 2001 Frankfurt Book Fair

by Bob Lacovara

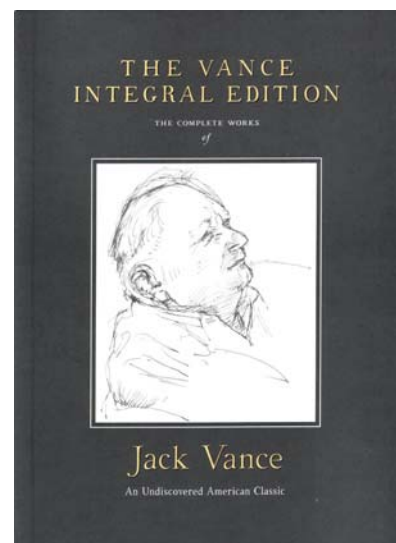
At long last, the VIE brochures from the Frankfurt Book Fair are available. These brochures were handed out for free to publishing professionals at the Book Fair, but for a limited time (because quantities are limited) you can have one for much more than free!

To wit: a mere US\$10 will bring you one of these beautifully printed and bound brochures, although if you are outside the range of 'domestic media mail' of the US Post office, you get hit for US\$13. (If for some reason you need more than one, I'll combine your shipping, and save you a few dollars. Domestic US will be \$19 for two, \$27 for three. Outside the US, \$23 for two, \$32 for three. If you need more than that, best to write me. The webform currently just multiplies copies by \$10 or \$13, but presumably, Suan Yong will read this with baleful eyes, and make the necessary changes.)

The brochures are quite tasteful, even elegant. In six languages you may read about our project, Jack Vance, and the Amiante font. The 51st page is a fold out illustrating the Amiante typefaces. On the inside back cover is a tasteful memorial to those murdered on September 11, with a thoughtful and appropriate quotation from *The Star King*. The booklet is 210 mm by 147 mm, and 5 mm thick, printed on a lovely hard white paper.

All in all, you will enjoy this unique and well-made souvenir of the VIE Project. Supplies really are limited: if you want one of these brochures, don't hesitate to order. We are not likely to reprint them before the next Book Fair, and the next reprints will differ somewhat (in that 'family' will be spelled with fewer than two 'I's, Paul.)

An order form for single copies is on the VIE web page, <http://www.vanceintegral.com/products/> Orders from the EU will be shipped from France, and the rest of the world from Houston, Texas. Each brochure will be shipped in a padded mailing envelope.



A Glimpse of Norwescon 25

by Norma Vance, with John Vance

Jack Vance was Guest of Honor at the 25th Norwescon Fantasy and Science Fiction Convention in Sea-Tac, Washington, during the Easter weekend — Ed.

I'd like to explain first that I did not get around the convention much, so this will not be a description of Norwescon 25 as a whole. It was my responsibility to see that Jack showed up when and where he was required to be, and so I attended all of his appearances; but unfortunately I was not able to participate in any of the workshops, or join some of the other ceremonies which filled the four days of Norwescon 25.

We did have the privilege though to meet a lot of intelligent and talented people, all genuinely addicted to Jack Vance's writing, and totally absorbed in what he had to say about his adventures and his work.

Wednesday, March 27:

Jack and I arrived at Sea-Tac at about 2:45 P.M. We were met at baggage claim by Bob and Ali Grieve, organizers and guest liaisons for the convention; they helped us retrieve our luggage, then bundled us into a limousine for the five minute ride to the Doubletree Inn—our hotel, and venue for the convention.

The Doubletree Inn is a 14-story construction, with a 3-dimensionally intricate floorplan capable of leaving one feeling confused and lost, at least on short acquaintance. The elevators are glass enclosures looking out over the landscape, lovely if the observer is not acrophobic. . .

Our room with two queen beds was large and comfortable; and had a spacious deck still in winter mode—no furniture—but the air was too chill to open the sliding doors. We saw gray skies with tattered clouds for much of our stay; the Seattle area averages 300 days of overcast weather per year!

There was no programming, and little registration this first day. We rested a bit, then I unpacked and put things away while Jack listened to his cassette-player. We weren't hungry after eating a sandwich and a cookie just before our plane landed at Sea-Tac,

so we went early to bed without going out for dinner.

Thursday, March 28:

Registration began in earnest. We had breakfast in the coffee shop; our waitress, who was of late middle-age, was extremely solicitous; it seemed she couldn't do enough for us. Jack and I were both thoroughly 'God-blessed', to which I dutifully said 'thank you' each time.

After breakfast I took Jack to one of the hospitality rooms where guests of the convention could relax and talk with one another. Coffee, tea, soft drinks and finger foods were served. Here, Jack met fellow Guest of Honor Dr. James Glass, a published biophysicist and professor and dean (retired) at the nearby Eastern Washington University. Jack was very pleased to share his views on the cosmos with Dr. Glass.

While Jack was so occupied I took my VIE materials down to where registrations were taking place. I had Paul's drawings and maps (which John had printed onto 8 ½ x 11 photo glossy paper) enclosed in sheet protectors, laid out on the table; also the Frankfurt brochures, and examples of the Readers and Deluxe editions of *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*. I spoke with many people about the VIE, praised the Gift Volumes, and explained the drawings and maps. Most people were already tuned in to the VIE via the website, many had read *Cosmopolis*, and a number were subscribers.

I eventually collected Jack and we had a light lunch. Several young people stopped by to introduce themselves and tell Jack how much they appreciated his being a guest of the convention, or how much they enjoyed his writing and ask when *Lurulu* would be published. We told them he was working on it daily and sometime this year he hoped it would be done.

Opening ceremonies were at 2 P.M.; after his introduction Jack gave a short speech thanking the convention for his invitation, and in general was as accomodating as he could possibly be.

We invited the Grieves to our room for cocktail-hour. With his mind on dinner, Jack raved about the steamed clams he used to enjoy at Spenger's Fish Grotto (a once-venerable establishment on the Berkeley waterfront, now remodeled and sadly de-characterized after a change in ownership). Bob

thought a visit to Ivar's Restaurant would be just the place to go for some seafood. On our way out we asked a new friend, Vladimir Degen to join us and about thirty minutes later we arrived. The only problem was that it was fifteen minutes after closing and we were unable to convince them to seat us anyway. After we discussed the situation for a moment, Vlad noticed another restaurant a few blocks away and ran down the street to check it out, but found that they were booked up. They recommended the Metropolitan Café in downtown Seattle, a restaurant with a well-deserved reputation for excellence, and that would still be open. It was a gracious establishment and we were not rushed through dinner. I had king crab legs with drawn butter, which I thoroughly enjoyed; everyone else had steak of one sort or another. We, and one other party, closed the restaurant.

Beth Meacham arrived this afternoon, also our good friend David Alexander.

Friday, March 29:

In the mid-afternoon John and Alison arrived, just in time for Jack's first duty of the day, a coffee-klatch 'Visit with Jack Vance'. John pushed Jack's wheelchair while Ally rode on her smiling grandpa's knee. Once delivered, and seated comfortably on a couch, Jack answered questions at length, and all gave him devoted attention. Jack enjoyed his audience as much as they enjoyed him, and the time passed swiftly.

After this we adjourned for dinner to the Appreciations Buffet in the Penthouse.

Saturday, March 30:

There was a very nice breakfast buffet this morning, but no one was especially hungry.

After breakfast, John and Alison took a look around and managed to find outdoors a pie-throwing event, where Convention kids were encouraged to unleash barrages of whipped cream upon a small shivering group of Convention organizers. At first bashful, Alison finally took heart and launched a beautiful shot that plopped someone square in the face. There was good reason for giggles!

We had a pleasant lunch with Robert Kruger of ElectricStory.Com, also the husband-and-wife artist team of Cory and Catska Ench, and Dave Alexander, John and Alison. ElectricStory is doing an e-book

publication of the *Lyonesse* trilogy, using VIE-restored texts, and Cory and Catska did the 'cover art' for the e-books. These paintings won both Best Fantasy and Chairman's Awards at the convention art show! Catska misses her family back in Uzbekistan tremendously—she and Cory are trying to bring them to the USA, but so far have had no success. We wish Robert Kruger, and Cory and Catska Ench luck in all of their endeavors.

After lunch was another coffee-klatch and autograph session for Jack; then at 3 P.M. I (Norma) joined a mock version of The Weakest Link gameshow, in which the contestants were mostly Star Trek Klingons, in full regalia! I had been invited to play in the game, and so had Jack; I agreed but he refused, for some reason; I hadn't known about the emphasis upon Star Trek related questions, and now I was in far beyond my depth. But I was a good sport, and everyone had fun. When I was voted off (a 'mercy killing'), a couple of burly Klingons 'helped' me off the stage and out through the door, and then made pounding sounds as if someone were being thrashed. When we returned to the room I pretended I had given them a shellacking, and everyone had a good laugh. Jack sat through it and managed not to look embarrassed (I think he even dozed off, which couldn't have been easy as Klingons are not the quietest of races!). Alison must have wondered what was going on, while John thought how remarkable it was that I'd gotten myself into such a situation!

Costuming and masquerades are a big thing at Norwescon. There were workshops on costuming, and classes demonstrating how to make the decorative elements. Many attendees were costumed every day of the convention, and it was really interesting to see.

I finally had time to walk through the Dealers' Room. I was hoping to locate an artist named Rhonda Gheen, who makes beautiful porcelain dragons decorated with gemstones. I thought she might be present, because I'd heard she lived in the Northwest, but I had no luck finding her. Elaborate costumes were for sale in several booths, and both men and women were trying them on and making their selections.

Before dinner Jack had a pleasant interview with Andrew Hamlen. Jack obliged several more people with autographs, and even I signed a few convention programs for the article I wrote called *A Different View of Jack Vance* and perhaps also because Jack

credited me with helping him through the years, especially since he lost his eyesight.

Sadly, John and Ally had to leave at 6 P.M. to catch their plane back to the Bay Area, and so they missed having dinner at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse with us and Beth Meacham and Claire Eddy (both of TOR), and Greg and Astrid Bear, with their teenage children Erik and Alexandra. John used to tag around after Astrid, who was six or seven years older than he, in the old days when we shared our houseboat with Poul and Karen Anderson. He was looking forward to seeing her, after so many years, but it didn't work out. Greg was in a jolly mood and teased Beth unmercifully.

Sunday, March 31:

The last day of the convention. Things were winding down, and mostly we just sat around, visiting with friends, answering questions and signing a last few books. We had breakfast with Bob and Ali Grieve and Bob's daughter, Autumn, with her two-year-old daughter, Emily. Autumn had helped a lot—even doing wheelchair duty. We hope we'll see these wonderful people again, maybe at Worldcon in San Jose this year.

This last night, we finally got to Ivar's for dinner, thanks to an old friend, Jerry Chilson who lives in Enumclaw, about forty-five miles from Seattle. He had made reservations for 4:30 which we made on time, but we didn't make it back for the closing ceremonies at 6 P.M. which would have been Jack's final appearance. It may have been just as well since Jack had just eaten two pounds of clams so liberally drenched with garlic and melted butter that everywhere he went for at least a couple days the smell of garlic followed.

Everyone we met at Norwescon did their utmost to help us and make us comfortable. Pat Booze (Chairwoman of the Norwescon group, I think) was fun-loving and full of nonsense; in fact she went so far as to kiss Jack on top of the head on the day we arrived. The next day she did the same thing, and the next; each day we were there, in fact, Jack got a kiss on the head. On Monday when we left we learned that Pat had made a bet that she could kiss Jack every day, and so she did. . .

Much else was memorable at Norwescon 25, but I'll end here.

First Wave Textual Integrity

by Steve Sherman, TI Administration

I'm pleased to be able to report that the Textual Integrity team has kept its commitment for the First Wave of the VIE. Twenty-six volumes of the set have been processed: 2,761,100 of Jack Vance's words, restored to the state he intended, by the efforts of the volunteers listed below.

Of the completed volumes, twenty-two will be part of the actual First Wave; thus this list does not exactly represent what will be shipped later this year. The volumes, and the workers who prepared them, are:

Volume 1	<i>Mazirian the Magician</i>	Tim Stretton
Volume 4	<i>The Rapparee</i> <i>Big Planet</i> <i>Vandals of the Void</i>	Patrick Dusoulier Patrick Dusoulier Kurt Harriman
Volume 6	<i>The Insufferable Red-Headed</i> <i>Daughter of Commander Tynnott, OTE</i> <i>Golden Girl</i> <i>Chalwell's Chickens</i> <i>The World Between</i> <i>Meet Miss Universe</i> <i>Masquerade on Dicantropus</i> <i>Abercrombie Station</i> <i>The Mitr</i>	Suan Hsi Yong John A. Schwab R.C. Lacovara Rob Gerrand John A. Schwab Rob Friefeld R.C. Lacovara Derek W. Benson

	<i>When the Five Moons Rise</i>	Jeffrey A. Ruszczyk
Volume 7	<i>The Languages of Pao</i> <i>Gold and Iron</i> <i>Charges</i>	John Robinson, Jr. David A. Kennedy Patrick Dusoulier
Volume 9	<i>The Miracle Workers</i> <i>The Last Castle</i> <i>The Dragon Masters</i>	Richard Chandler Rob Friefeld Ron Chernich
Volume 10	<i>Strange People, Queer Notions</i> <i>The Flesh Mask</i> <i>Bird Isle</i>	Helmut Hlavacs Paul Rhoads Dave Worden
Volume 11	<i>The House on Lily Street</i> <i>The View from Chickweed's Window</i>	Paul Rhoads Linnéa Anglemark
Volume 12	<i>The Dark Ocean</i> <i>Bad Ronald</i>	Koen Vyverman Rob Friefeld
Volume 14	<i>The Man in the Cage</i> <i>The Deadly Isles</i>	Suan Hsi Yong Suan Hsi Yong
Volume 17	<i>Rumfuddle</i> <i>Sulwen's Planet</i> <i>The Kokod Warriors</i> <i>Ullward's Retreat</i> <i>Coup de Grace</i> <i>Dodkin's Job</i> <i>Alfred's Ark</i> <i>The New Prime</i> <i>The Men Return</i> <i>The Moon Moth</i> <i>Green Magic</i>	Thomas Rydbeck David A. Kennedy David A. Kennedy David A. Kennedy Rob Gerrand David A. Kennedy Thomas Rydbeck Helmut Hlavacs Ken Roberts R.C. Lacovara John A. Schwab
Volume 19	<i>The Magnificent Showboats of the</i> <i>Upper Vissel River, Lune XXIII, Big Planet</i>	Alun Hughes
Volume 20	<i>Emphyrio</i>	Alun Hughes
Volume 21	<i>Tschai</i>	Linnéa Anglemark
Volume 25	<i>The Face</i>	Patrick Dusoulier
Volume 26	<i>The Book of Dreams</i>	Patrick Dusoulier
Volume 28	<i>The Domains of Koryphon</i>	Rob Friefeld
Volume 29	<i>Trullion: Alastor 2262</i>	Thomas Rydbeck
Volume 30	<i>Marune: Alastor 933</i>	Tim Stretton
Volume 31	<i>Wyst: Alastor 1716</i>	Tim Stretton

Volume 36	<i>Suldrun's Garden</i>	Steve Sherman
Volume 37	<i>The Green Pearl</i>	Steve Sherman
Volume 38	<i>Madouc</i>	Steve Sherman
Volume 39	<i>Araminta Station</i>	John A. Schwab
Volume 40	<i>Ecce and Old Earth</i>	John A. Schwab
Volume 41	<i>Throy</i>	John A. Schwab
Volume 42	<i>Night Lamp</i>	Christian J. Corley

On behalf of TI and VIE management, thanks to you all for a job well done. But don't rest on your laurels: Wave 2 awaits. Indeed, some Wave 2 TI assignments have already been made.

And I want to add a special word of thanks from the entire TI team to Norma Vance and her son and daughter-in-law, John and Tammy Vance. The yeoman work done by these wonderful people has been chronicled in these pages before: copying documents for mailing to team members and the matchless hospitality provided for last year's TI Conference. But they have also been an indispensable resource for the TI work itself: Norma has answered dozens or hundreds of specific textual questions, further ensuring that the VIE will live up to its promise of being the last word on Jack Vance's artistic intentions.

Post Proofing Report

by Chris Corley, Post Proofing Manager

Post Proofing, the largest phase of the VIE in terms of volunteer hours required, is in high gear. Post Proofing started its first assignment on 30 April 2001, nearly a year ago; the first several weeks were spent smoothing out processes and protocols, assembling teams, and learning what it means to carry out a Post-Proofing job.

In 2001 there were 24 Post Proofing assignments completed, several of which were part of the Gift Volume effort. Much was learned during the work on these texts, including—for the Post Proofing Manager—how to manage several simultaneous jobs. Speaking strictly from the standpoint of Post Proofing, the process of producing the Gift Volume was valuable because it prepared Post Proofing for the high volume of work it has received so far in 2002.

As of 25 March 2002 15 texts have completed Post Proofing just in 2002, an average of better than five texts per month, compared to three per month in 2001. There is no slowdown in sight: seven texts are scheduled to complete Post Proofing by the end of April. Here are the statistics for overall flow of VIE texts through 'Final Post Proofing' (not counting

the Gift Volume texts and other special assignments):

30 of 132 texts complete (22.7%)
1,299,000 of 4,364,400 words proofed (29.8%)

As most Cosmopolis readers would hope (and expect), the bulk of this effort has been focused on Wave 1 texts. Here are the numbers for just Wave 1 texts:

29 of 51 texts complete (56.9%)
1,297,600 of 2,356,600 words proofed (55.1%)

I see the work of the individual Post Proofing volunteers and the Subteam Managers on a regular basis and I am consistently and continuously impressed with the quality and volume of work that they all produce. I am proud to be associated with the entire team; they have worked extremely diligently to ensure that we will receive high-quality texts in our eagerly anticipated VIE volumes.

If you are interested in participating in VIE Post Proofing, please contact Hans van der Veeke at volunteer@vanceintegral.com We have over three million words left to proof, and we need your help.

Gratitude To Post Proofers

from VIE Management

VIE Gift Certificates

Joel Riedesel, VIE Work Czar, and Robin Rouch, head of the Clam Muffins, conceived the 'VIE promotional merchandise' for the Clam Muffins, but we think it is such a nice idea that we want all Post Proofing teams to benefit.

The most massive job in the VIE is Post Proofing. We are off to a good start, but we still have a long way to go. To keep up volunteer morale we are offering a special incentive/thank-you to all Post Proofers! This offer will be good for the duration of the project, to the limit of a budget determined by our financial controllers on the Board of Directors. Post Proofers who proofread 400,000 words will receive a \$20 VIE gift certificate toward any of the promotional items made available by Joel and Robin Rouch. With your certificate you may get a VIE T-shirt, mock turtleneck, or cap (shipping cost included!) or, by adding a few dollars yourself, a sweatshirt, chambray shirt, driving jacket, etc. These items are all available in a variety of colors. Visit the website to see the full range of items offered.

Fun facts:

There are 7 Post Proofing Subteams

$400,000 \times 6 = 2.4$ million = Wave 1

The Clam Muffins have already proofed 375,000 words

Wave 1 = 54% of the total VIE words

Araminta Station (the longest text) = 191,000 words

The promotional items are, of course, also available without certificate! They are the perfect gift for any VIE volunteer, and an appropriate vestimentary accompaniment to project work. The items are very nice and not expensive.

Questions should be directed to Joel Riedesel at joel@ourstillwaters.org

Visit the website at

<http://www.ourstillwaters.org/stillwaters/viepromo>

CRT Update

by Robin Rouch, CRT Lead

The Composition Review Team (CRT) has been doing an exceptional job of helping to push texts through the system. Since January 2002, the CRT has completed 25 texts (1,101,400 words!).

Even though the team only scans the texts, they have managed to find many composition and proofreading problems. They have even found two cases of missing text: Marcel noticed that the last chapter was missing from *Marune* and he and Charles found a cut-off footnote in the behemoth *Araminta Station!*

I am truly in awe of the team's conscientiousness, adroitness, and unflagging stamina. I laud and appreciate their efforts.

Here is a list of those who have consistently and significantly contributed to Composition Review during my tenure:

Andreas Björklind: 213,400 words, 7 texts

Chris Corley: 532,900 words, 14 texts

Marcel van Genderen: 648,100 words, 12 texts

Brian Gharst: 321,000 words, 6 texts

Charles King: 760,900 words, 15 texts

Bob Luckin: 206,100 words, 7 texts

Paul Rhoads: 730,000 words, 10 texts;

Is there anything our EiC doesn't do?

Yours Truly,

Robin Rouch: 725,500 words, 17 texts

Big Planet, Big Scissors . . .

by Patrick Dusoulier

Most of you, dear Readers, are under the impression that you have read *Big Planet*, a novel written by Jack Vance, as published by ACE in 1957. Well, I have some news for you. . . First the bad news: you've been had! What you have read should have been entitled 'Small to Medium-Sized Planet': a novel

remotely inspired by an original* text written by Jack Vance, as published in *Startling Stories Magazine*, Sept. 1952. The good news is that you will have 'Full Planet' in the VIE edition, in all its vivid details and content. . . If you're already one of the happy owners of the Underwood-Miller 1978 edition, you know what I mean. If you're not, I hope this article will give you a fair idea of the nature and extent of the editorial mayhem perpetrated by the ACE Editor.

Apart from the usual editorial interventions on punctuation and style, which occur for practically all the Vancean *oeuvre*, the ACE Editor seems to have had two preoccupations: reducing the length of the original text, and edulcorating its content. By doing the first, the Editor managed to fulfil a large part of the second (and vice versa), but also resorted to rewritings, substitutions and euphemization. I have to admit that this was often very cleverly done, with considerable attention to details, and in particular with an effort to maintain consistency within the text. In some cases though, they missed out, as you will see . . .

During my TI work on *Big Planet*, I have kept track of these editorial butchering activities, and I have attempted their categorisation. You will find in this article a goodly number of examples. . . but WARNING: this may spoil your own pleasure at discovering those extraordinary variants by yourself once you have the VIE book in your hands. So read on, if you will, but don't say you haven't been warned. . .

No Sex!

Well, that's the first bowdlerisation you would expect. . . Let's start small:

End of Chapter II, Nancy wants to join the party, and is trying to convince Glystra to accept:

* Well, not quite the original. . . In fact, we've lost what would have indeed been 'Gigantic Planet'. Here's the story behind the *Big Planet* manuscript, as told by Norma in a mail:

"The one thing I remember is that the original MS was very long. Jack let a local well-known editor, one Anthony Boucher, read it. After a couple of months on tenterhooks, he returned the MS to Jack with the advice that it was too long and would never sell at that length. Jack was greatly disappointed. He went to work and cut possibly 200,000 words. The discarded pages were used for first drafts which were destroyed after being transcribed. The MS stayed with his then agent, Scott Meredith, until it sold two or three years later to *Startling Stories*."

ACE: Glystra sank back on the couch, shaking his head. "You can't come with us, Nancy."
She bent over. "Tell them I'm a guide. Can't I come as far as the forest?"

SSM: Glystra sank back on the couch, shaking his head. "You can't come with us, Nancy."
She bent over; he felt her breath on his face, warm, moist. "Tell them I'm a guide. Can't I come as far as the forest?"

=> Too moist for ACE. . . This seductive detail had to go.

In a similar vein, ACE suppressed a phrase that I consider a most extraordinary description of lust: chapter XIX, in the Myrtlesee Fountain hall, Nancy makes her entrance to join the Bajarnum:

ACE: For a moment she paused in the doorway, then slowly crossed the room, the only woman among hundreds of men, a peacock among crows. Eyes followed her.

SSM: For a moment she paused in the doorway, then slowly crossed the room, the only woman among hundreds of men, a peacock among crows. Eyes covertly followed her, tongues moistened celibate lips.

=> 'celibate lips'. . . Again, too 'moist' for ACE.

Polygamy and polyandry smack too much of group orgies, I suppose. This time, the Editor didn't use scissors, he racked his brain. . . and adjusted the text: chapter IV, Glystra explains Bishop's expertise, the 'study of culture':

ACE: He can look at an arrowhead and tell you whether the man who made it took his name from his father or his father.

SSM: He can look at an arrowhead and tell you whether the man who made it had six wives or shared a wife with six men.

=> ACE could have made a compromise, and written "took his name from his father or his mother"!

ACE didn't miss any detail, and was very thorough. In chapter VI, the leader of the captured Beaujolain soldiers expresses his anti-Earth feelings:

ACE: "We'd die here in Beaujolais, before we'd let ourselves be so degraded," declared Morwatz with fine fire.

SSM: "We'd die here in Beaujolais, before we'd let ourselves be emasculated," declared Morwatz with fine fire.

=> Balls of fire! Let's castrate the text instead, said the Editor!

We come now to a major anti-sex change. It happens in Kirstendale. Glystra has just soaked out the fatigue of the trek amidst foam and bubbles, and steps out of the luxury bathroom:

ACE: The man had disappeared. A girl carrying a towel on two outstretched arms was there, smiling. "I am your room-servant. However, if you prefer, I will go."
Glystra seized the towel, wrapped himself in it. "Give me my clothes."

SSM: The man had disappeared. A girl carrying a towel on two outstretched arms stood before him smiling. She wore a short black skirt, no more. Her body was tan and lovely, her hair arranged in a stylised loose swirl.

"I am your room-servant. However, if you find me unpleasant or unsuitable, I will go."

She seemed very sure that he would find her neither. Glystra stood still a moment, then seized the towel, wrapped himself in it.

"Does—um, everyone get a playmate?"

She nodded.

"The women too?"

She nodded again. "That they may welcome you with renewed pleasure when at last you depart."

"Mmmph," snorted Glystra. He wondered about the man now possibly standing before the naked Nancy. "Mmmph."

He said with a brusqueness and finality he did not altogether feel, "Give me my clothes."

=> This drastic reduction in ACE, this removal of one of the Kirstendale 'attractions', has important consequences: Glystra is in fact insanely jealous, and keeps wondering about Nancy and her 'personal man-servant'; but ACE had to remove all further references. For instance:

ACE: Glystra hurried to the main hall, anxious to find Nancy. But she was not yet in evidence. Pianza and Elton sat alone at the table, eating pink melon.

Glystra muttered a greeting and sat down. A moment later Nancy entered the room, fresh, blue-eyed, more beautiful than Glystra had ever remembered her. During breakfast he tried to fathom her mind. She was pleasant, detached, cool.

SSM: Glystra hurried to the main hall, anxious to find Nancy. How had she spent the night? The question throbbed at the back of his mind like a bubble of stagnant blood. But she was not yet in evidence. Pianza and Corbus sat alone at the table, eating pink melon.

Corbus was speaking. "—think I'll trade Motta in on this yellow-haired girl. That's the way to cross a planet, wench by wench!"

Glystra muttered a greeting, sat down. A moment later Nancy entered the room, fresh, blue-eyed, more beautiful than Glystra had ever remembered her. He half-rose to his feet, caught her eye. She nodded casually, dropped into the seat opposite him, began to dip into the pink melon.

Glystra returned to his own food. Big Planet was not Earth. He could not judge a Big Planet girl by Earth standards. . . . During breakfast he tried to fathom her mind. She was pleasant, detached, cool.

=> Glystra is a man obsessed: the question is throbbing 'like a bubble of stagnant blood!' Pathological jealousy. . . . Note that the ACE version doesn't make much sense, there's no apparent reason for Glystra being 'anxious to find Nancy' in context, nor to try to 'fathom her mind'. As to Glystra's heroic resistance to the charms of his personal bath-attendant, one is allowed to have some doubts: in the original version, wine and liquor seem to affect Glystra to some extent (alcohol is another dangerous step toward sin and fornication. . . .). The night before, here's what happened, in fact:

ACE: The evening passed. Glystra, head spinning from the wine, was conducted to his room.

The morning attendant was a thin-faced young man, who dressed Glystra after his morning bath, in silence.

SSM: The evening passed. Glystra, head spinning from the wine and liquor, was conducted to his room. Waiting to undress him was the girl who had helped him into his clothes. She moved on soundless bare feet, murmuring softly as she unclasped the buckles, untied the hundred and one ribbons, bindings, tassels. Glystra was drowsy. Her voice was warm and heady as mulled wine.

The morning attendant was a thin-faced young man, who dressed Glystra after his morning bath in silence.

=> I suspect (but this must be my dirty mind) that Glystra has been quietly raped during his drowsiness. He must have cooperated, somehow... The original version also makes it clearer why Glystra gets a 'thin-faced young man' the morning after. His hosts don't want to over-tire him, surely. As to the 'morning bath in silence', that's the best method when you have a hangover.

Note also Corbus' earlier remark about 'trading Motta in on this yellow-haired girl'... This leads to another example of anti-sex snipping. In chapter VIII, the Earthmen come across two young girls (sixteen or seventeen...) named Motta and Wailie, who want to become slaves, because that's an easier life than their current one:

ACE: Glystra looked at them irresolutely. If he set about righting the wrongs of everyone they met, they would never arrive at Earth Enclave. He looked over his shoulder.

Elton caught his eyes. "I could use a good servant," he said easily. "You—what's your name?"

"I'm Motta. She's Wailie."

Glystra said weakly, "Anyone else?"

Pianza shook his head. Roger Fayne snorted, turned away.

SSM: Glystra looked at them irresolutely. If he set about righting the wrongs of everyone they met, they would never arrive at Earth Enclave. On the other hand—a stealthy thought—if the other men in the column were provided with women, it would be possible for him to advance his own desires. Of course, camp-followers would slow up the column. There would be added supply problems, emotional flare-ups.

He looked over his shoulder. Corbus caught his eyes as if divining his thoughts.

"I could use a good slave," he said easily. "You—what's your name?"

"I'm Motta. She's Wailie."

Glystra said weakly, "Anyone else?"

Pianza shook his head. "I'm much too old. Too old." Cloyville snorted, turned away.

=> Glystra is a much more cynical man than we thought: he's prepared to provide his men with women, to 'advance his own desires', i.e. get into the sack with Nancy! Note that those girls are rather young, too... Note also the ACE euphemism,

substituting 'servant' for 'slave'. Interestingly, Pianza declines the offer because of his age, not on moral grounds, nor because of his marital status. This is something the ACE readers don't know, but Pianza is married and has kids. Why did ACE suppress this, one may wonder, this was a nice family touch! Maybe it's part of the No Kids policy (see further down)! Anyway, in chapter XIV, after Pianza's death:

ACE: Glystra shook his head glumly, looked toward Pianza's grave. A fine fellow, kind, unassuming, cooperative. He turned back to the silent group.

SSM: Glystra shook his head glumly, looked toward Pianza's grave. No more Pianza. It was a real loss. A fine fellow, kind, unassuming, cooperative. A wife and three children awaited his return to Earth, but now they would never see him again. The Earth calcium of his bones would settle into the Big Planet soil... He turned back to the silent group.

To get back to Wailie and Motta, and Kirstendale: in *Startling Stories*, the two girls really enjoy their stay, and in particular their man-servants, but in such a subtle way that ACE couldn't do much about it:

ACE: "Of course there is no meat," Motta pointed out, "but who cares? The fabrics and the perfumed water and—" she glanced at Wailie and giggled. They looked at Elton and Bishop, and giggled again. Bishop blushed, sipped green fruit juice. Elton raised his eyebrows sardonically.

SSM: "Of course there is no meat," Motta pointed out, "but who cares? The fabrics and the perfumed water and—" she glanced at Wailie and giggled. They looked at Corbus and Bishop, and giggled again.

Bishop blushed, sipped green fruit juice. Corbus raised his eyebrows sardonically. Glystra chuckled; then, thinking of Nancy, asked himself ruefully, what am I laughing at?

=> the em-dash following <and>, Bishop's and Corbus/Elton's reaction, don't make much sense in ACE. It is all perfectly understandable in *Startling Stories*. Note in passing that ACE still managed to suppress Glystra's reaction, with his double take and realisation that it's not so funny after all...

Eventually, Wailie and Motta will stay in Kirstendale, leading to a wry conclusion from

Corbus/Elton, the lucid engineer who knows his limitations. . . Here again, ACE had to intervene:

ACE: Glystra turned to Elton. "How about Motta?"
Elton looked at Bishop. "Let's face it." He grinned.
"We can't compete with Kirstendale."

SSM: Glystra turned to Corbus. "How about Motta?"
Corbus looked at Bishop. "Let's face it." He grinned.
"We're just not the men these Kirsters are. . ."

No Nudity!

The ACE Editor must have considered nudity as a dangerous intermediary step towards sex, and decided to expunge it as well. Better safe than sorry.

The first occurrence of this editorial obsession occurs in chapter III, when Glystra explains to Nancy how Big Planet was settled:

ACE: The first settlers, almost six hundred years ago, were primitivists—people who dislike machinery, except for simple things like wagons. Primitivism isn't forbidden on Earth, but they were treated like freaks.

SSM: The first settlers, almost six hundred years ago, were nudists—people who dislike the wearing of clothes. Convention on Earth forbids nudity.

=> ACE took this concept of 'primitivists' from Jack's text further down, which of course had to be suppressed. . . more of this later. The fact that the original settlers were actually nudists makes Glystra's remark later on, found in both ACE and Startling Stories, a bit more logical:

ACE: The primitivists liked Big Planet. It was paradise—sunny, bright, with a mild climate,

SSM: The nudists liked Big Planet. It was paradise—sunny, bright, with a mild climate,

=> admittedly this mild climate is something the 'primitivists' must have enjoyed as well, from an agricultural point of view.

In chapter IX, the description of the Magickers is ruthlessly expunged, although it would be hard to find any sexual connotation in their quasi-nudity:

ACE: Glystra caught a glimpse of Ketch scrambling out with a bit of line, then turned to meet the onrush of a line of the Magickers—gaunt men, all.

SSM: Glystra caught a glimpse of Ketch scrambling out with a bit of line, then turned to meet the onrush of a line of the Magickers—gaunt men, naked except for the G-string at their loins.

=> The G-string makes the Magickers look rather like strip-teasers in a night-club, I think, but that's what Jack wrote. . .

Another instance of nudity taboo, in chapter XVI, when Glystra gets a first look at the infamous pens where he expects Nancy to have been imprisoned:

ACE: Glystra pressed close to the stone wall, peered through an irregular hole at about eye-level. A dozen men and women stood in the middle of the room, or sat limply on stone benches.

SSM: Glystra pressed close to the stone wall, peered through an irregular hole at about eye-level. A dozen men and women, completely naked, stood in the middle of the room, or sat limply on stone benches.

=> Jack's original description of the pens is much more vivid (see No Smells), but ACE had to go on snipping bits and pieces, such as:

ACE: "Well—which one is she?" snapped Nymaster.
"That one at the far end?"
"No," said Glystra. "She's not here."

SSM: "Well—which one is she?" snapped Nymaster.
"That one at the far end?" This was a long-headed creature with pendant breasts and a yellow wrinkled belly.
"No," said Glystra. "She's not here."

=> "Aaargghh! 'pendant breasts'?! 'yellow wrinkled belly'?! Bring me my scissors!!!" roared the Ace Editor.

When came the time for Glystra to be himself 'pent in the pens', the ever-vigilant Editor had his scissors ready:

ACE: Glystra stood in the middle of the stone floor, damp and miserable. His head was shaved, he had been drenched in an acrid fluid smelling of vinegar.

SSM: Glystra stood in the middle of the stone floor, naked, damp, miserable. His clothes had been stripped from him, his head was shaved, he had been drenched in an acrid fluid smelling of vinegar.

And when Glystra manages to escape from the abattoir, Eagle-Eye Editor gives another little snip:

ACE: A man stole through the night, trailing the odor of death.

SSM: A naked man stole through the night, trailing the odor of death.

=> I'm convinced that had Jack mentioned 'naked blades' in Big Planet, the mighty editorial scissors would have gone 'snip-snap' too!

No Kids!

The ACE Editor found a number of scenes too strong for his taste. In particular violence to children.

Here's the episode in chapter X, when Clodleberg/Osrik spots ambushers about to attack the monoline travellers:

ACE: Behind a low orange bush crouched three youths. Bows and arrows ready, they watched the line like cats at a mousehole.

"Here's where they get their early training," whispered Osrik. "When they are older they go to raiding the towns of the March and all the Galatudian Valley." He quietly nocked a quarrel into his crossbow.

SSM: Behind a low orange bush crouched three boys about ten years old. Bows and arrows ready, they watched the line like cats at a mousehole.

"Here's where they get their early training," whispered Clodleberg. "When they grow larger they go to raiding the towns of the March and all the Galatudian Valley." He quietly nocked a quarrel into his cross-bow.

=> Those ten-year-old boys have grown a bit in ACE, and the whole sinister and pathetic flavour of the passage has evaporated. The pathos is reduced furthermore with one additional ACE snip:

ACE: Glystra struck up his arm; the bolt shattered a branch over the head of the would-be assassins. Glystra saw their white faces; then they were off, scurrying like rabbits.

SSM: Glystra struck up his arm; the bolt shattered a branch over the head of the would-be assassins. Glystra saw their white faces, big dark eyes, open frightened mouths; then they were off, scurrying like rabbits.

=> terrified kids scurrying like rabbits with open frightened mouths. . . Although Clodleberg is right: they are potential murderers also, at best.

ACE was extremely careful and consistent in this pruning exercise, as shown in the next passage:

ACE: "Why did you do that?" asked Osrik heatedly. "Those same skulkers may murder me on my way back to Swamp City."

Glystra could find no words at first. Then he muttered, "Sorry. . . I suppose you're right. But if this were Earth, they'd be at college."

SSM: "Why did you do that?" asked Clodleberg heatedly. "Those same skulkers may murder me on my way back to Swamp City."

Glystra could find no words at first. Then he muttered, "Sorry. . . I suppose you're right. But if this were Earth, or any of the System planets, they'd be at their schooling."

=> how the kids have grown. . . They've made it to college now!

Another episode involving children has been removed by the ACE Editor. It is indeed extremely disquieting:

ACE: Bishop called up something that Glystra did not catch; Glystra turned away. The Magickers were stealthily sliding closer. "Get back! Back!" he said flatly. "Or I'll cut your legs out from under you."

SSM: Bishop called up something Glystra did not catch; he had been distracted by the scene in the room immediately below the roof where he stood, a room now open to the air where the wall had fallen away. Glystra's throat contracted, his stomach twitched. . . Twenty children hung by their hair two feet off the ground. Stone weights were suspended from their feet. Wide-eyed, silent, the children stared from bulging eyes into the new openness, silent except for a hoarse breathing.

"Making tall ones out of short ones," came Corbus' cool voice.

"Look farther down," said Glystra in a low voice. "In the room next lower."

Corbus threw a glance toward the prancing Magickers, peered down under the roof. "Can't see too well. . . It's confused. . . Oh—"

Glystra turned away. The Magickers were stealthily sliding closer. "Get back! Back!" he said flatly. "Or I'll cut your legs out from under you." In a lower voice he said, "I guess it wouldn't make any difference to you if you've all gone through—that. . ."

=> those children hanging silently two feet above the ground, just a 'hoarse breathing'. . . Shudder! I'm still trying to puzzle out why they are subjected to this treatment. As to what's happening in the room below, we'll never know. Notice how ACE somehow manages to do 'clean cuts' while maintaining a structured text, even if in ACE the 'Glystra turned away' makes no sense at all, since he has nothing to 'turn away' from.

There is one case where the ACE Editor has been very subtle: instead of suppressing the reference to children, he has diluted it. In chapter XX, when Glystra has finally captured Charley Lysidder:

ACE: Glystra laughed. "Now you spit nonsense, like an angry cat. Any requiring to be done will be for the hundred thousand men, women, and children you've sold into space."

SSM: Glystra laughed. "Now you spit nonsense, like an angry cat. Any requiring to be done will be for the hundred thousand children you've sold into space."

=> somehow, Charley Lysidder's sordid business appears more acceptable in ACE because it's less specialised. . .

In one case, the ACE editor managed to achieve a simultaneous 'no kids' and 'no sex', or at least to make them less explicit: in chapter XVI, when Glystra and Nymaster are trying to get to the pens:

ACE: Nello uncoiled like a lazy python, sauntered yawning across the sunny garden to the boy, raising his whip.

Nymaster pulled at Glystra's arms. "Now. . ."

SSM: Nello uncoiled like a lazy python, sauntered yawning across the sunny garden to the quivering boy, and raising his whip, carefully and without haste striped the child's buttocks. Once—twice—three times—

Nymaster pulled at Glystra's arms. "Now while he's absorbed in his enjoyment. . ."

=> Jack was much more explicit in his description of this sadistic paedophilic pervert. . .

No Cannibals!

The ACE Editor didn't appreciate cannibalism, and seems to have considered slavery as a marginally more acceptable activity. He put a lot of efforts in transforming Jack's original text.

It begins with a soft touch, in chapter II, when Vallusser describes the perils awaiting the group of stranded Earthmen:

ACE: There's nothing out there—" he waved his hand down the slope "—but wild men. They'll kill us. Some of them are slavers.

SSM: There's nothing out there—" he waved his hand down the slope "—but wild men. They'll kill us. Some of them are cannibals.

=> ACE didn't realise that this modification doesn't make good sense; slavers—at least successful ones—don't kill their prisoners, they want to sell them!

Later, in chapter VI, when Morwatz describes the gypsies, the Ace Editor had to exercise his powerful creativity:

ACE: Morwatz found it difficult to shape his thoughts. "First there is Nomadland and the gypsies. If they capture us, they'll hitch us to their wagons and drive us like zipangotes". He nodded in the direction of the pack animals. "They are men of a different race and they detest the Beaujolains."

SSM: Morwatz found it difficult to shape his thoughts. "First there is Nomadland and the gypsies. If they capture us, they'll roast us alive and eat us. They are men of a different race and they detest the Beaujolains."

=> Not badly done, I must say. The Editor has found an interesting alternative to being roasted alive, and has managed to introduce the zipangotes explicitly in the text, consistent with what is mentioned later in both versions:

< Glystra halted the column, regrouped the soldiers, arranging them in a square around the pack-beasts—zipangotes, so Morwatz called them.>

To be pedantic, ACE might have better changed this to <zipangotes, so Morwatz had called them.> . . .

Thorough was the Editor's middle name, there's no denying it. In chapter VI, Morwatz is commenting on the troupe of gypsies who are threatening them:

ACE: Only Politboros ride zipangotes. We can fight off Cossacks—they have little spirit, no discipline, no method, no mind. As soon as there are a few captives to sell, or hitch to their wagons, they are content.

SSM: Only Politburos ride zipangotes. We can fight off Cossacks, they have little spirit, no discipline, no method, no mind. Only hunger. As soon as there are a few bodies, no matter whose, they are content.

=> 'Politboros' in ACE is not a typo: it's a consistent change they made throughout the text . . . Probably part of the No Politics bowdlerisation . . .

And Morwatz pessimistically concludes:

ACE: Morwatz said fretfully, "Why are you so interested in the mannerisms of the race? Tonight, we will be pulling their wagons . . ."

SSM: Morwatz said fretfully, "Why are you so interested in the mannerisms of the race? Tonight, they intend to eat us . . ."

There are many more instances of this modification, but one is particularly spectacular, because it concerns Nancy's projected fate when she is captured by Heinzelman/Atman. Chapter VII, when Glystra is trying to bargain for Nancy's freedom:

ACE: Atman looked negligently over his shoulder. "A woman of the slopes we found by the forest this morning. She will fetch a handsome price." Glystra said, "Bring her forth. I will buy her from you."

SSM: Heinzelman looked negligently over his shoulder. "A woman of the slopes we found by the forest this morning. She will be spitted at this evening's camp." Glystra said, "Bring her forth, I will buy her from you."

=> By making this change, the ACE Editor has done more than just betray Jack's work: he has also completely ruined the logic behind Glystra's next move, his 'grim decision', i.e. executing Abbigens

with his ion-shine. Glystra is not doing this simply to demonstrate the power of his weapon, he's in fact preparing for a good trade! Watch this:

ACE: [Atman says:] "Ah! There are none such among us; we pursue our own business. We are warriors, killers, slavers."

Glystra came to a grim decision. He turned his head. "Bring out Abbigens."

SSM: [Heinzelman says:] "Ah! There are none such among us; we pursue our own business. We are warriors, killers, eaters. And if I gave you the woman, tonight we should go hungry."

Glystra came to a grim decision. He turned his head. "Bring out Abbigens."

=> Then Glystra shoots Abbigens, after having said "If killing you did not serve a practical purpose . . ." and we have:

ACE: "Give me the woman," said Glystra, "or I'll bring this same death to you."

SSM: "Give me the woman," said Glystra, "or I'll bring this same death to you. I give you the corpse in her place."

=> And so, the gypsies will have 'Abbigens à la bourguignonne' tonight, instead of 'Rôti de Nancy' . . .!

No Gore!

The original text contains some rather nauseating details, which were not to the liking of the ACE Editor.

For instance, killings are not 'nice' in the original *Big Planet*. Not nice at all . . . Chapter IV, the Tree-people episode:

ACE: The soldier looked down at his comrade on the ground, muttered resentfully, then drew his sword from the sheath, stabbed the fallen man. Behind the tree Glystra swallowed the lump in his throat.

SSM: The soldier looked down at his comrade on the ground, muttered resentfully. He drew his sword from the sheath, stabbed the fallen man through the chest, the neck, finally up through the eye-socket. Behind the tree Glystra swallowed the lump in his throat. After a moment he was once more able to see the clearing.

No Religion!

=> How's that for a killing? No wonder Glystra doesn't feel well. . .

Another nasty killing scene, chapter VII, Morwatz's death:

ACE: Nearby, Morwatz lay moaning from deep in his throat. The soldier who had first kicked him deliberately drew his sword, and punctured Morwatz.

SSM: Nearby Morwatz lay moaning from deep in his throat. The soldier who had first kicked him came forward, a tall man with concave cheeks, a pocked forehead, a split nose. He looked down, and Morwatz regarded him with glazing eyes and moans gradually ascending in pitch. The soldier deliberately drew his sword, punctured Morwatz' neck—once, twice, three times, as if he were prodding a rock. Morwatz gurgled, died.

=> look carefully: you will see the scissors' cuts are quite neat. . . neater than those sword strokes!

Those were simple murders. There's also 'murder en masse'! Chapter XV, Glystra and the remainder of his troupe are being chased by the Rebbirs. Glystra has managed to draw the Rebbir band up the slope of a gully:

ACE: He aimed it at the first Rebbir zipangote, squeezed. The white skullhead shattered into a scarlet crush. The beast threw up its front legs like a praying mantis, poised briefly, then fell into the beasts behind.

Glystra whirled his mount, led the way along the ridge.

SSM: He aimed it at the first Rebbir zipangote, squeezed. The white skull-head shattered into a scarlet crush. The beast threw up its front legs like a praying mantis, poised briefly, swung gradually over backwards, fell into the beasts behind.

A tangle of writhing flesh. White skull-faces, despairing eagle-men, a horrid tangle at the bottom of the slope—a talus of hot jerking flesh, the horny bodies of the zipangotes, the softer sinews of men, clotted together like hiving bees.

Glystra whirled his mount, led the way along the ridge.

=> 'clotted men and zipangotes'. . .! What a recipe for the cannibals: 'Pâté de Rebbirs aux zipangotes'!

The ACE Editor may have been concerned about offending established religions, and took strong measures to avoid being sued, or worse, having *Big Planet* added to the Index*!

His attention first set upon this mysterious character we meet at the beginning of the book, on board the spaceship:

ACE: Pianza looked uneasily around the lounge—empty except for a Sister of Succor who sat statue-quiet, the visible section of her thin white face rapt in meditation.

SSM: Pianza looked uneasily around the lounge—empty except for the nun who sat statue-quiet, the visible section of her thin white face rapt in meditation.

=> so the 'nun' becomes a Sister.

And the Editor is so eager to show that he's on the side of good deeds and cleanliness, that he feels a strong urge to add bits of his own. When Pianza comments about the nun/Sister, (<"Peculiar creature," muttered Pianza.>), Glystra replies:

ACE: Glystra laughed. "There's no one on Big Planet but peculiar people; that's why they're there. If she wants to convert them, or just engage in her own private peculiarity, that's her privilege. And except for the way she dresses, I'd list her peculiarity as a credit to any planet."

SSM: Glystra laughed. "There's no one on Big Planet but peculiar people; that's why they're there. If she wants to convert them to her own private peculiarity, that's her privilege."

If the nun had to become a Sister, then the 'priests' of Myrtlesee had to become 'sages'. . . This begins at chapter XVI, when the sword merchant describes the Dongmen (hey, this one escaped the Editor's attention!):

ACE: With an expression of surprise at his ignorance, the merchant shook his head. "The sages are celibate. More likely she has been taken to the slave pens."

* Index: list of books forbidden to Roman Catholics, or to be read only in expurgated editions. The full title is *Index librorum prohibitorum*.

SSM: With an expression of surprise at his ignorance, the merchant shook his head. "The priests are celibate. Only the herarchs allow themselves the use of women. More likely she has been taken to the pens."

=> in passing, note the discreet snip of scissors about the 'use of women'. . . Notice also how ACE corrupts the meaning of the text by inserting 'slave' before 'pens': they're not slave pens, they're the pens where prisoners await their fate, i.e. having their heads cut off, brains extracted and boiled 'à la zygage'!

To illustrate how thorough the Editor was, look at this:

ACE: Glystra bowed low. He saw the hem of robes, exceedingly rich.

SSM: Glystra bowed low. He saw the hem of priestly robes, exceedingly rich.

=> in those days when there was no word-searching facility, one has to admire the fact that ACE didn't miss this ecclesiastical aspect of the robes. . .

No Persons of Jewish Heritage!

Some characters' names were modified in ACE. In one case we know why, thanks to Norma Vance. The hetman of the Gypsies is called Heinzelman the Hellhorse in *Startling Stories*, and was changed to Atman the Scourge in ACE. Norma told me the story behind this, when I asked her about all those name changes:

"Jack remembers only that he named Heinzelman the Hellhorse (regardless of whether zipangotes were the local transportation) and that some editor in fear of offending those of Jewish heritage made the change to Atman the Scourge (which might offend Turks but not Jews). This change made Jack so angry it's the only thing he remembers."

No Politics!

This was kept as classified information for many years, but I'm now at liberty to reveal that the ACE Editor probably saved the world as we know it: thanks to his vigilant snips of scissors, World War III did not take place in 1957 when the ACE book came out:

ACE: There was room for other minorities—endless room. Out they migrated—all the cults, misanthropic societies, and just people in general.

SSM: There was room for other minorities—endless room. Out they migrated—all the cults, misanthropic societies, primitivists, communists, religious monasteries, just people in general.

=> had the 'communists' been left among 'minorities' and 'cults', I have no doubt that the Soviet Union leaders would have been enraged and would have retaliated with a launch of nuclear missiles against the ACE building, leading to a nuclear holocaust. Notice also that the 'religious monasteries' went out with the same cut. The primitivists had to be cut too, since ACE used them to replace the nudists. . . This didn't leave much, that's the problem with scissors editing.

No Smells!

The ACE Editor had a sensitive nose: no chife nor stench for him!

Apply a scented handkerchief upon your nasal appendix, and let me take you to the pens of Myrtlesee Fountain:

ACE: These were the pens of Myrtlesee Fountain. The air was gruel-thick; Glystra breathed through his mouth to escape awareness of the odor.

SSM: These were the pens of Myrtlesee Fountain. The air was gruel-thick with latrine reek and slaughter-house odors, seeping in with the steam from the processing rooms. Glystra breathed through his mouth to escape awareness of the stink. Horrible odor—but it was a poor time to be fastidious.

And just the mention of the word is enough to make the Editor wrinkle his delicate nose:

ACE: Steam poured in from the processing room through chinks and cracks in the stone

SSM: Steam and stench poured in from the processing room through chinks and cracks in the stone

No Brains!

I'm not talking about Editors in general. . . The ACE Editor carefully removed the more gruesome details

from *Big Planet*, and in particular those related to the brain boiling necessary for the oracular process in Myrtlesee:

ACE: Almost under his face a cauldron bubbled; to the left a bin held acorn-shaped fruits.

SSM: Almost under his face a tray held four neatly arranged heads, with their brain-pans sawed off to display the mottled contents.

Glystra twisted away his gaze. To the right a cauldron bubbled; to the left a bin held acorn-shaped fruits.

This sort of editorial meddling sometimes leads to continuity inconsistencies, although ACE has been very careful generally. Here, Corbus/Elton is visiting Glystra in the pens, and he exclaims:

ACE: What a hole. What are they cooking?"
"You saw," said Glystra indifferently. "They distill out some kind of nerve juice which they mix with zygage and feed the oracles.

SSM: What a stinking hole. What are they cooking?"
"Brains," said Glystra indifferently. "They distill out some kind of nerve juice which they mix with zygage and feed the oracles.

=> ACE doesn't make sense: if Corbus/Elton had seen what was boiling, why should he ask?

No Excrement!

Sorry about this, but I must mention it, if I want to be thorough.

Chapter V, the Beaujolain soldiers have been captured:

ACE: Moss Ketch took a couple of steps toward the blaster; he signaled, muttered a few words, backed off into the woods. The soldiers reacted with a small ripple of motion. A curt monosyllable from Darrot froze them.

SSM: Ketch took a couple of steps toward the blaster, signaled, muttered a few words, backed off into the woods. Glystra watched without seeming to watch as Ketch attended the needs of his body. The soldiers, noting Ketch's momentary preoccupation, reacted with a small ripple of motion. A curt monosyllable from Darrot froze them.

Another case in chapter XVII when the Voivode expresses his dissatisfaction at the pitiful wretch who's supposed to oraculate for him:

ACE: The Lord Voivode roared in contempt. "Is this the creature who is to advise me? Faugh! He appears unable to do more than tremble in fear!"

SSM: The Lord Voivode roared in contempt. "Is this the creature who is to advise me? Faugh! He appears unable to do more than empty his bowels in fear!"

To Conclude . . .

I think that by now you have a fair idea of the extent of this Editorial Catastrophe. You will find many more examples when you read the VIE edition, I couldn't show them all, *Cosmopolis* is not large enough, and I must leave some space for those fascinating Letters to the Editor about Religion, otherwise readers will be frustrated. . . Most of all, I want you to have your own fun at spotting them.

I have always enjoyed reading *Big Planet* in the ACE version, but always felt somewhat unsatisfied: there was not enough of it, and this *Big Planet* didn't seem as terrifying as it was supposed to be. Now I'm quite content: there's much more, and more frightening than I expected. . . So I hope you will enjoy this restored text as much as I enjoyed restoring it!

38's Crucible

by Paul Rhoads

A New Subscriber

Early in March internationally celebrated pianist Richard Goode gave a concert in New York. After the performance fans surged back-stage. Among the throng, our correspondent. When Goode, recently offered a copy of *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*, our 'Gift Volume', caught sight of her, forgetting all else he produced the book (apparently his constant companion) and spoke only of his discovery of Vance and his intention to subscribe to the VIE.

Richard Goode is celebrated for his performances of the sonatas of Beethoven and Schubert, the concertos of Mozart and the suites of Bach. He is also a well-known chamber musician on the New York scene, and regularly gives recitals with such singers as Dawn Upshaw. But Goode is more than a

versatile musician; he is a monumental reader. His home is dominated by a gigantic library, and each year he produces an informal publication, *The Bookworm*, with notable passages from his year of reading. Goode is no stranger to science fiction, a particular interest being Lem, but his literary tastes are best indicated by his preference for Dickens.

That the VIE Gift Volume has made it possible for someone like Richard Goode to discover Vance is proof that this VIE public-relations effort is a success.

In a related note: recently on *France Culture*—one of the French public radio stations—Frederick Lodion, cellist, musicologist, and most famous classical-music-maven *de la francophonie*, raved about Goode, proclaiming him one of the greatest artists of our time, and the *scandale* of his relative obscurity in France. Hmm! that reminds me of *something* . . .

Steve Sherman's Lyonesse

The *Lyonesse* books, like all the other texts of Wave 1, have made it through TI, and Steve Sherman—whose breast we hope is swelled with justifiable pride—is suffering post-partem blues. Steve is not an editor, or writer, or connected in any way with publication. He is a programmer. But thanks to two years of intensive work, the VIE version of this trilogy will be exemplary. Steve got this job because he wanted it. He earned the right to have his desire honored by demonstrations of competence and devotion to the project—through his work as pre-proofer and later as head of pre-proofing. When TI needed a new administrative lead Steve took this on as well; for a long time he has been a keystone of this volunteer project.

Many consider Lyonesse to be Vance's masterpiece. Given the extent and diversity of his *œuvre* it is a hard call to make, but a point of view all of us can sympathize with, and Steve is among those who feel that way.

Concerning the differences between the VIE text and the other published versions Steve himself can report best, but one thing is sure; our version is most faithful to Vance's intent, and in fact as nearly identical to them as it is humanly possible to get.

What can you look for in the VIE version as corrected by Steve? Though there are only a few dramatic changes, changes of all kinds are pervasive: Vance spelling, punctuation, and other

stylistic mannerisms have been restored, and thanks to work with manuscripts a certain number of lacunae and errors corrected.

Steve has had the benefit of all the extant evidence, including various manuscripts, the setting copies, Norma's errata sheets and of course the published editions. In the manner of a medieval monk at work in a scriptorium Steve has meticulously compared and annotated them all, consulting with Norma when he reached an impasse, and worked closely with Patrick Dusoulier, his 'Second'.

Steve has spent certainly hundreds, if not thousands of hours. If anyone were counting, what would Steve's contribution to *Lyonesse* be worth? Such work is not bought at minimum wage! Reviewing Steve's hundreds and hundreds of endnotes for these books I have come to appreciate his devotion, wit and sensitivity, to say nothing of his respect of and appreciation for Vance's prose.

Were the price of Steve's *Lyonesse* work to be added to the VIE's cost, I calculate that it would add 20 or 30% to the cost of each subscription.

Concerning frontispiece illustrations for these books, Steve has suggested a scheme, which cannot be improved upon and will be used.

When I get my VIE *Lyonesse* volumes, the first thing I want to do is get them signed by Steve Sherman. For as long as this great work is known and loved, Steve Sherman's name will be associated with it—and that will be only simple justice; he has earned gratitude and recognition for what he has done. For me Steve's signatures will be, above all, a treasured reminder of the pleasure of working with him.

Wave 1

March 8th: *Cosmopolis 24* has not yet been published, but flashing e-mail messages over the last few days make it clear that Wave 1 is on target. In fact we will even have, strictly speaking, more texts than we need.

While many people are responsible for getting us over John Foley's Wave 1 *line in the sand* ("all Wave 1 texts in Composition by March 30") a few exceptional efforts should be mentioned. First of all, Patrick Dusoulier, who in the last few months has worked day, and apparently night, to push through an exceptional amount of work, both as wallah (primary TI worker) and TI Second (the wallah's

guide and helper, who also performs the Board Review with the designated Board Reviewer). Next, Suan Yong, who came through in good time on several important TI jobs, despite difficult conditions including the necessity to visit the Mugar, while also keeping up his school work at the University of Wisconsin. Patrick is Suan's Second. Neither Patrick nor Suan are native speakers of English, but their TI work is on the highest possible level, and the inevitable tedium of Board Review (those hundreds and hundreds of issues to review!) with their texts is always alleviated by a few good laughs along the way.

The collected *Tschai* volume was *almost* part of Wave 1, but Linnéa Anglemark was impeded from a timely finish by various obstacles, including server problems (Europe is beginning to slide into the communications deregulation jungle that America is finally escaping—slamming has just begun in France!) and moving into a new house. However, *Tschai* is almost done, and will be among the first Wave 2 texts to get attention.

Now that TI has performed its Wave 1 duties, since Damien Jones, Ron Chernich and their teams have given us a jump-start on Wave 2 texts, Steve Sherman and his wallahs are already turning their attention to these. The composers, John Schwab, Joel Anderson and Andreas Irle, driven relentlessly forward by Damien's *Imps*, Robin Rouch's *Proud Few* (the composition review team) and Chris Corley's seven Post Proofing teams, are getting the Wave 1 texts into good order, under the overview of Joel Riedesel, our work Czar, and Tim Stretton, who has been appointed Golden Master Editor. Tim will be coordinating final corrections.

This spring and summer we will be assembling the texts into their respective volumes, with their respective 'front matter' (title pages, maps, etc) and getting them ready for the printer by fall. Read all about it in upcoming issues of *Cosmopolis*.

The SFV

The Languages of Pao and *The Dragon Masters* is coming along well; both texts are through Post Proofing, the introduction has been written; we only need to finalize covers. Our priority has been Wave 1 work, but the SF Volume will certainly be on order in the next *Cosmopolis*.

Post Proofing

Chris Corley has commissioned 7 regular subteams. Their names and leads are:

The Clam Muffins - Joel Riedesel and Robin Rouch
The Dragon Masters - Erik Arendse
King Kragen's Exemplary Corps - Robert Melson
The Penwipers - Rob Friefeld
The Sandestins - Jeff Ruszczyk
The Spellers of Forlorn Encystment - Till Noever
The Tanchinaros - Dave Reitsema

Not to mention Chris's own *Funambulist Evangelists*, which are not a regular subteam but a rag-tag, pick-up group, for when the going gets rough.

Inter-team rivalry is intense! The other day Rob Friefeld boasted that the *Penwipers* 'wipe their pens' with the *Tanchinaros*. Dave Reitsema will certainly have something to say about that. *The Clam Muffins* notoriously look with disdain upon all others, and are regarded in turn with envy, except by *The Spellers of Forlorn Encystment* who hold themselves aloof. *King Kragen's Exemplary Corps* is the new kid on the street, but is already earning grudging esteem.

Post Proofers are eligible for special prizes and rewards, so if you are not already struggling up the ledges, remain a nimp no longer: do PP!

The Man In The Cage

Here are some interesting extracts from the *Man in the Cage Textual Integrity Narrative* by Suan Yong:

Publishing History:
Random House, 1960
Boardman, 1961
Mayflower, 1961
Underwood-Miller, 1983

Other evidence:

Non-final draft typescript with hand-corrections, at the Boston University Special Collections in the Mugar Memorial Library, pages 152-216, on verso of *Miracle Workers* manuscript, box 5.

I inspected this, and concluded that the manuscript is non-final: it is a typescript with profuse hand-corrections, and a comparison of a select few pages with the v-text yielded many divergences.

Note: this book had a working-title of: *No-One Knows Where He Went* and was published under the 'John Holbrook Vance' name.

Evidence Assessment and VIE Textual History:

The VIE-text was digitized and double-digitized against the Underwood-Miller (UM), which is the most commonly available edition. Alun Hughes has kindly loaned me his copy of the Random House (RH) edition, which is a first edition/first printing; I made a quick scan of RH, compared it with the UM-based v-text, and recorded the differences as endnotes. I further selected a few checkpoints, and requested that Koen Vyverman compare them against his Mayflower (MF) edition, and that Mike Berro compare them against his Boardman (BM) edition; these too have been recorded.

From the differences between editions I conclude that: RH is the only edition based off of the manuscript. All other editions use RH as the base text, and include their own corrections, editorial changes, and sometimes new errors. They are, therefore, of no evidential value to TI. UM has its own editing style, which might be characterized as 'sanitizing'. Interesting examples include:

UM=There is only one logical move.

RH=Prostitution is the logical move.

UM=Does she want me to make love to her?

RH=Does she want to go to bed with me?

UM=raggedy.

RH=raggedy-ass.

UM=Miss Busybody.

RH=Miss Sizzlebritches.

UM=Darn it.

RH=Damn it.

Suan could have cited many more examples, and these are hardly the spiciest ones. Suan, with the help of Patrick, has done an excellent job.

VDAE, Composition, and Golden Master News

The story of the VDAE will one day have to be told in its entirety. It is a tool that is saving us untold hundreds of man-hours. The 'error free' state of the final texts will owe much to this amazing tool and its creator, the 'Laughing Mathematician'.

Besides its Technoproofing utility (importantly complemented by Ian Davies' WordPick output) Koen's IRS (Incredible String Retriever) has proved a precious TI tool. For the last few months Koen Vyverman has also enabled the VDAE to output 'vcr' files, which produce lists of potential composition features of a Word document such as extra spaces at the end of lines, and other hidden or hard to notice elements like reversed quotation marks.

Koen is currently creating a new VDAE analysis function which will enable a 'diff' (automatic comparison) of RTF (Rich text format) output from InDesign (which is now our unique composition tool). This will permit us to easily detect dropped or doubled text resulting from the necessarily brutal manipulations of the transfer from Word document to setting program. This same RTF 'diff' will be performed on the final document set in InDesign (after all CRT and PP updates) for a final pre-Golden Master check.

A few months ago it was decided by John Foley (Head of Composition) to switch from Quark/PageMaker to InDesign. This decision was based on the clear superiority of the latter program, which handles justification more successfully than the other programs, as well as permitting 'hanging punctuation'. These features make the set texts noticeably more suave and closer to a hand-set result. This change-over means that text already set in Quark/PageMaker must be transferred to InDesign. This step turns out to be less simple than was hoped, and requires both hours of Composer time and a new CRT check. These extra steps are being pursued under the vigilant management of John Schwab (Assistant Head of Composition, and VIE archivist) and Joel Riedesel (VIE work Czar). The contribution of John Schwab and Joel to smooth flow of the by now *incredibly* complex flow of work, cannot be overstated.

Tim Stretton, as mentioned above, has accepted the post of Golden Master Editor. He will be responsible for coordinating all final TI changes to already set texts, based on reconsideration of evidence based on recent advances in TI techniques and knowledge. Some of this knowledge is based on Steve Sherman's close work with the various *Lyonesse* manuscripts. Tim has also taken over the 'TI Security Check', which I was doing exclusively up until recently. This job includes a diff of the IMP file (the file with TI changes 'implemented' by the Imps) with earlier files like raw-v1 and the 'monkey' file (which collates DD results) to make sure no text has

been lost, to resolve any IMP-Comments (the Imps sometimes catch TI nodding, Cosmopolis editor Derek Benson is #1 champion Imp in this regard) and final reconsideration of any TI issues. Security Check is the last step before the Word file becomes 'cor-bf' or 'correct-board final', which then goes to Composition, and then to CRT, and then CRV, and then Re-Comp, and then—pant, pant—to quote Robin:

PCRv: Post-CRV Composition Updates Review—Verification that Composition updates have been made per the CRV Report.

PP: Post-TI Proofreading.

PPR: PP Review by TI—Review of PP Report by TI (and addition of TI Propositions, if needed).

PPRV (I sometimes call this PPV just to keep things lively): PP Review Verification—Review of PP Report (with TI Notes) by Paul.

CPP: PP Composition Updates—Composition Updates based on verified PP report.

CPPR: Post-PP Composition Updates Review—Verification that Composition updates have been made per the PPRV Report.

CCRT?: May be CRT of something that wasn't CRT'd before PP or it could be what I call Re-CRT. I'm guessing.

Re-CRT: Re-Review of Composition Updates—This is a re-review of the text itself because Composition changed something major (e.g., reset with InDesign).

Re-PCRv: Re-Review of Post-CRV Composition Updates—This is re-verification of the Report because there were outstanding issues from a previous PCRv/Re-PCRv Report.

Re-CPPR: Re-Post-PP Composition Updates Review—This is re-verification of the Report because there were outstanding issues from a previous CPPR/Re-CPPR Report.

GM: Golden Master.

GMRR: Golden Master Review Ready.

GMSC: Golden Master Security Check.

Got that? Put another way: dozens of Wave 1 fin-files will be passing repeatedly over the Composers' and CRT teams' screens in the next few months.

Locus Review Reviewed

In the February 2002 Locus, Jonathan Strahan reviewed *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*, in company with some other fantasy books; he had been sent a complementary copy after offering to write a review. The review is fairly long, the bulk of it being a précis of each story, with occasional allusions to other authors, books or films, and a few,

not always complimentary, judgments thrown in. *Alfred's Ark* "lacks the richness that characterizes [Vance's] best work". *Flutic* "does not stand alone particularly well". *Dodkin's Job* is "obvious and heavy handed". And best of all: "The sexual politics underlying *The Murthe*, like the politics underlying most of the stories collected here, is disturbingly conservative and even reactionary". Sigh.

The most interesting part is the beginning: "When stories first began appearing under the byline 'Jack Vance', science fiction was largely a place of transparent prose, plainly spoken characters, and bug-eyed monsters with an inexplicable preference for Earth women. Vance's early stories, characterized as they were by rich, stylized prose, mannered characters, and drawing-room plots must have seemed both refreshing and unusual to the readers of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Super Science Fiction*. His stories weren't about the latest gadget or technological doodad—instead they tended to focus on strange, alien cultures that allowed him to indulge in the often satirical asocial commentary that would prove characteristic of this entire body of work. Despite the undoubted importance of his contribution to the genre—his first and most famous book *The Dying Earth*, transformed the field."

Strahan seems to take an interest in Vance principally as a precursor to such writers as Gene Wolfe and Harlan Ellison (both mentioned). He regrets that a "classic such as *The Gift of the Ga*" [sic] was not included. There is a minimum of information about the VIE, emphasizing the European connection, but he fails to communicate any sense of the unprecedented, revolutionary quality of the project, or how this reflects on Vance. What other writer has inspired his readers to such an unprecedented effort? Nothing on this.

Strahan ends his review as follows: "*Coup de Grace* . . . is . . . the only English-language collection of Vance's fiction currently in print, and, if for no other reason, is worthy of recommendation." A far cry from what a Luk Schoonaert would have written. Luk did write: "I believe Jack is the greatest writer of all times. He got me to start reading, and after 15 years of reading his books I'm still crazy about them." Luk's relation to literature is visceral; he reads for pleasure and nourishment; his attitude is fresh, free and convincing. Another VIE volunteer, Mark Luetschwager, wrote: "I consider [Jack Vance] to be the greatest writer of all time. I've read *Maske: Thaery* about 50 times, have bought and given away about five copies of that

book, and have urged all my friends to read *the best* short story ever written, *The Moon Moth*, from my treasured copy of *The Many Worlds of Jack Vance*. . . For many years I've considered making a 'pilgrimage' from Wisconsin to Oakland, but suspecting that Jack has much of the 'mad poet Navarth' in him, have avoided the almost certain unpleasant rebuff/disappointment I would encounter. I wait with bated breath the sequel to *Ports of Call*, which I know will be great. Could you believe the *Cadwal Chronicles* would be so brilliant? How on Earth can he maintain that genius level of creativity? I truly believe Jack's to be a reflection of the mind of God. Sometimes my friends say I get carried away when I start talking about Jack Vance, but who could read *The Dirdir* and not come away awed? I would consider VIE volunteer work as a tribute to the many hours of enjoyment that I've gotten, but unfortunately my pay comes in slim packets of single toldek notes, so while I'll be able to make the Reader's Edition subscription, generous cash donations are unlikely. I look forward to participating in this great and truly worthy project, and I'm sorry if I seem suspicious—do you ever find that people who read a lot of Jack Vance are particularly sensitive and wary of potential schemes and underhanded plots to try to mulct them of their money?"

Note that Mark is very humanly able to make a proper distinction between Vance's (presumptive) personal qualities and his artistic achievement, avoiding the typically modernist error of confounding the artist with his art. Compared with his frank, witty and informative writing, Strahan's droop-lidded survey, name-dropping commentary, authoritative judgments, and numbingly predictable political prejudices, is in contrast. Blind to the live essence of what he is reading, he seems to have cut himself off from the real nature of art altogether, Vance's or anyone else's. The only thing 'reactionary' about Vance is that some readers are incapable or unwilling to recognize satire and truth. In the context of a not-completely-stupid Political Correctness *The Murthe* could be judged 'reactionary' if indeed it were a tract advocating *suppression of the resurgent female force*. But, obviously—though not obviously enough for some—it does nothing of the sort. With reference to *The Murthe*, and quite apart from the merits or demerits of 'women's liberation' understood in the broadest sense, has not every single normal person, man and woman alike, not had occasion to be astonished by some feminist act or statement? Are we to meekly assume that such reactions are unjustified in all respects? Is it not permitted to turn a critical eye upon feminism's

'modes and means'? For the likes of Strahan, certainly not—on pain of being relegated to the status of 'conservative reactionary'.

Yet Vance's social criticism encompasses the full circle of human phenomena. Would Strahan label 'reactionary' this passage from *Night Lamp*?

"Society without ritual is like music played on a single string with one finger." Such was the dictum of Unspiek, Baron Bodissey in his monumental LIFE. He pointed out further: "Whenever human beings join to pursue a common objective—that is, to form a society—each member of the group will ultimately command a certain status. As all of us know, these status levels are never totally rigid."

At Thanet on the world Gallingale, the quest for status was the dominant social force. Social levels, or 'ledges', were exactly defined, and distinguished by the social clubs which occupied and gave character to that particular ledge. Most prestigious of all the clubs were the so-called Sempiternals: the Tattermen, the Clam Muffins, the Quantorsi; membership in such clubs was tantamount to the prestige of high aristocracy.

The stuff of social advancement—'comporture'—could not easily be defined. Its main components were aggressive striving up the ledges, gentility, wealth and personal mana. Everyone was a social arbiter; eyes watched for uncouth behavior; ears listened to hear what should not have been said. A moment's lapse, a tactless remark, an absent-minded glance might negate months of striving.

To presume to a status one had not earned was met with instant rebuff. The perpetrator would incur wondering contempt, and might well be branded a 'schmeltzer'. (Schmeltzer: one who attempts to ingratiate himself, or mingle, with individuals of a social class superior to his own.)

On Gallingale, the attainment of status was an exciting and often desperate quest. Those who refused to participate in the striving were 'nimps', and in general commanded no respect, even though many had won reputations for themselves in their own fields.

A person's status was determined by the prestige of his club and by his 'comporture': that dynamic surge which generated upward thrust, and was similar to the concept of 'mana'.

The social status of 'conservative reactionaries' is low, and no schmeltzing is tolerated by such pariahs. Even a nimp is better off! Those interested

in why Jack Vance's reputation is where it is today may profitably study the Locus review in detail.

Afterword To The Above

For those curious regarding the provenance of Strahan's prejudices, or the tendency of literary critics in general to use the tar brush epithet 'reactionary', I will offer the following historical précis. Uninterested readers are invited to skip it—I myself am weary of being called a 'fascist reactionary'.

By the beginning of the 20th century, writers, artists, many politicians and scientists, a majority of the 'educated', having become radicalized, almost systematically rejected any aspect of 'bourgeois middle class' society (at least in theory) in favor of Marxist-egalitarianism. Their basic idea: *the world would be a paradise, if only selfishness could be suppressed!* This notion—which in some ways is a decadent form of Christianity—unless it becomes part of a personal conversion has always ended up as a specific program: redistribution of property by force, and rejection of the constraining heritage of civilization (religion, morality, art, learning) all supposedly tainted by 'greed and exploitation'. The evil 'bourgeoisie' includes businessmen, but their private property attitude was shared by many non-bourgeois: artisans, the so-called 'petty' bourgeoisie, and especially farmers. The 'masses', shop and factory workers plus landless farm workers, were, and are, mostly conservative or apolitical. These categories persist today under other names and in different proportions, and Leftists have always sought to rally them to their cause. But without success; and when revolution has come, they have never benefited.* The 'uneducated masses' tend to know which side their bread is buttered on, and are not so needful of guidance as the supremely arrogant Leftists like to think. A true democratic majority (as opposed to elections rigged by fear or fraud) has yet to be found for 'The Revolution'. The Russian Revolution (financed by Imperialist German gold during WW1 to weaken Russia and so save the eastern front) has been the guiding torch of Leftism. But as Trotsky's barbaric Red Army took to crushing all surrounding nations, as Lenin systematically massacred Russian peasants and any other persons that stood in his way (rivals,

* If some Leftist revolutions in Africa and South America have led to real land reform (I know of no example) the massive land reform achieved by Franco in Spain proves that Leftist revolution is not necessary to achieve this, to say nothing of the broad base of land ownership in all true democracies.

businessmen, Jews, non-leftist intellectuals and artists) it became clear, to all who cared to open their eyes, that the sacred 'Revolution' was an imposture, an imperialistic tyranny. A perversion of Marxism? Every other State founded on Marxist ideals, whether China, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, or in South America and Africa, has turned out exactly the same way: massacres, collectivized agriculture and consequent famines, grandiose inhuman schemes humanly and ecologically ruinous, censorship, repression of basic freedoms, poverty.

In the nineteen-thirties, another Marxist, Adolph Hitler, came to power and also tried to take over the world. When his alliance with Stalin came to an end in the second year of WW2, the exigencies of the situation demanded that the West join with Stalin against Hitler. This was, and remains, a great piece of luck for the Left. Despite having been the most pervasive, murderous and perverse tyranny in the history of humankind, we still live in a climate of toleration for Communism that the war necessitated.

Hitler was branded a 'conservative reactionary'. This is, and remains, the ultimate slur; Communism, the ultimate good, is 'progressive'. It rejects the past in favor of a transformed future. If Hitler had supported restoration of Monarchies and religious faith—the dominant situation for centuries and centuries prior to the 20th century—then perhaps the label 'conservative', or even 'reactionary', would be justified. But Hitler was a Marxist-atheist, just like Stalin, he also advocated 'progress', and succeeded where all other Marxists have failed: the German economy of the 1930's was the most successful 'socialist' economy ever. ('Socialism' is the form of government advocated by 'Communism' which considers itself a 'philosophy'.)

To this day the Left tars anything and everything it disapproves of, including the American Republican party, the Catholic Church, or people who like to draw things they see as opposed to making 'abstract' scrawls as 'conservative reactionary fascists'.*

Even if the blatantly false Hitler-Stalin, 'right'-'left' equivalence were true, if you add up war casualties and death-camp tolls, while Hitler is responsible for

* I speak from bitter personal experience. Leftists will here accuse me of not taking into account the Soviet and Hitlerian opposition to modernist art, but I do no such thing. I simply point out that my refusal to reject normal drawing and 'traditional' artistic values, repeatedly cost me ostracism and insult. In the Leftist's scheme of things the 'past' is to be integrally rejected as a pest-hole of racism, homophobia, oppression of women and bourgeois finger-bowls. Meanwhile, these same Leftists almost always hold privileged places in society, at taxpayers' expense or thanks to non-Socialist commerce.

some 20 million murders, this is only some 20% of the ravages caused by only those Marxists the Left permits us to label as such. So called 'conservatives', which is to say, non-Leftist or more *normal* people, are willing to recognize the personal virtues of their political enemies, but no slander is too much for the Left. The man who has the historical honor of having spoken out first, and most unequivocally, against fascism and Hitler (the Communists said nothing, they were his allies!) and who then, individually, saved more Jewish lives during WW2 than anyone else, is now, thanks to a deafening international campaign of slander, almost universally thought a nefarious Hitlerian. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher who, whatever their qualities or flaws, were democratically elected in countries that have since enjoyed unparalleled prosperity and freedom, are continually presented by the majority of the World's media as nefarious malefactors.

When one points these things out, what results? The famous cries of 'fascist!' 'reactionary!' and devious tactics of censure. What can one do? Nothing but keep on, refusing to be silenced.

I am well aware that there are gradations of Leftism. I do not know, but I would guess, that the Leftism of a Jonathan Strahan is fairly mild. He probably condemns Stalin, but perhaps not that militarist butcher Trotsky. He may not believe that the Marshall Plan was an imperialist plot, but he may think America is unacceptably harsh on Cuba and Iraq. He probably thinks that Pius XII* shares Hitler's guilt, but probably would not actually vote for a Communist candidate. But the exact degree of Strahan's political confusion is of no interest to me except as it bears on the literary fortunes of Jack Vance; with reviews such as this, who is going to rush out to their corner book store, or write to their favorite editor? Strahan's ideological prejudice emasculates his literary sensitivity and thus his usefulness to art and culture.

That Jack Vance is nowhere on the literary map is not an innocent fact. When Solzhenitsyn, after having been a 'heroic dissident', turned out to be an equally staunch Christian and political conservative, he was instantly relegated to Nowhere. But the cat was out of the bag; the world had discovered that Solzhenitsyn is one of the greatest writers of the century. How did they know? Because when they (I

mean normal, un-ideologized people such as Luk Schoonaert, Mark Luetschwager and—'Magnus Ridolph patted his neat white beard with a napkin'—myself) read him, they enjoyed him more than they enjoyed other writers. Solzhenitsyn is still at work, but who hears of him today? There is tacit agreement within the cultural establishment, which is controlled by the Left, that Solzhenitsyn *will not exist*. They have an easier time with Vance; mostly non-political factors have conveniently kept his readership very small.

Please note that I am not accusing Strahan of being part of an organized plot to keep Vance down! I simply point out that his thinking is infected by those who have been perverting the minds of ordinary people for generations.

Saving Civilization

I never go to movies, so tonight (March 24) when they showed *Saving Private Ryan* on the TF1 (French TV, dubbed version), I saw it for the first time. Because of phone conversations with Koen Vyverman concerning the VIE, and with my father (a soldier in WW2, though he never went overseas) I missed most of the film. The parts I did see, however, were *bouleversant*.

The man who wrote this film (whose name I have forgotten) and the artisans who made it, have created a remarkable work of art; they have *shown* the *price* of freedom and civilization. The exalted, terrifying or hideous personal destinies and tragedies, are presented not as weird, grotesque and gratuitous accidents, the fruits of incomprehensible human folly (the Leftist approach), but in the true historical context of heroic and very *personal* sacrifice, both physical and spiritual, for the highest values. I am no Spielberg fan; the modernist 'moral ambiguity' he toyed with in *Schindler's List* is deeply distasteful to me. But the very special realism of the battle depictions—in fact not 'real' at all, but highly artistic—is a great artistic achievement.

My father-in-law, who died before I met my wife, was a soldier at Verdun, the youngest officer in the French army and one of the first aviators. (WW1 is considered by some, myself included, as the first episode in a 30-year war.) I have a dear uncle who served in the US air force in Italy; and a man who is very important to me, my painting teacher, a second father, was in the army that invaded Africa, Sicily and Italy, and was in the Anzio expedition. I could mention others, less closely connected to me

* The Catholic Church has publicly sought the pardon for those Church members who behaved badly during the War. Few Leftists have had the courage to expiate its guilty complicity with Communism, to say nothing of their actual alliance with Hitler prior to the breaking of the pact.

personally, who made similar sacrifices, like my father's youthful pal, Harry Bell, a surrealist poet of wonderful talent who became a certified paranoid at the end of his life and died last year in Paris; he was wounded on Okinawa. Or Walter Monaco, a semi-literate ex-boxing champion (welterweight; 60 wins, no losses) from New Haven CT, a carpet salesman in post-war Germany, a Parisian carousing companion of Danny Kay and Errol Flynn, and now a somewhat deranged Catholic zealot; he was part of the second wave (10 minutes after the first) at Omaha beach, and the first man to cross the bridge over the Rhine at Remagen.

These men, and of course hundreds of thousands of others that I do not know (each of us are related to or know some of them) sacrificed themselves, risking body *and soul* (the latter risk in particular so well expressed in the film) for what? So that I, and all of us, might live in peace and freedom, taking full benefit of knowledge, beauty and love. Those who wonder at my 'excessive' political-philosophical zeal, should consider how the Left, pretending to be the true representative of Good, constantly denigrates the sacrifices of these men, and the ideals that ennoble and sanctify their gift to us. To them we owe all that is beautiful in our world today. The constant Leftist denigration is shameful!

I write these lines in a fit of emotion. I do not know it for a fact, but I can't help thinking that this film helped prepare the ground for the surge of American patriotism after September 11.

After a period of normalcy, the European media is again up to its old tricks. The latest development is an absurd French book, sponsored by what is probably some Free Mason front, *Le Reseau Voltaire* (The Voltaire Network) which is getting daily media attention. It pretends that the Bush administration is the mastermind of the September 11th attacks, because it needed a way to get public approval for running a war. This is just one example of the grotesque, and in fact diabolical, lies and machinations of which occult and semi-occult Leftist forces are morally capable. The most distasteful aspect of such maneuvers—I refer to such things as the phrase: 'dead white males'—is the disdain they show for the risks and sacrifices of those who were, and are, on the life and death front lines of the eternal battle in defence of civilization.

Though not to be accorded the same degree of honor, the generosity of VIE volunteers is of the same nature. What is at stake, among other things, is beauty and truth, the possibility of experiences like those described by Luk and Mark.

Parisian Social Notes

To add a light-hearted coda to the above—and following Strahan's name dropping example—I will recount a personal incident from last week. I had gone to Paris to procure the tools I need for making volume frontispiece engravings. As engravers know, you need felt blankets in order to print. But real felt is hard to get nowadays, and even the famous engraving specialty store *Charboniere*—19 quay Montebello, just up the left bank from *Shakespeare and Company* where I left a VIE Frankfurt brochure—only offers a farcically expensive substitute product.

What to do? Perhaps a *chapellier* (hatter) would have felt? So I went to *Tete à Tete*, a hat store in the *Siem*, around the corner from my Parisian digs. It was about 7:00 p.m. and the store was empty except for an elderly woman speaking with loud voice and large gestures to a young girl with Renoir style glowing-white skin and auburn hair. The latter turned out to be a would-be hat-making apprentice, and the former the famous Josette, hatter to prince and proletariat. I ended up spending an hour with Josette and her apprentices in the studio above the store. Her anecdotes concerned her father's work as engraver (thus my warm welcome), French wines, the state of hat-making and other arts in France, the escapades and qualities of other famous *chapelliers*, innovations in hat making (it was Josette who invented the hat *san calotte!*) and some of her most famous customers, including the crowned heads of Europe, famous movie stars and such personalities as Rose Kennedy (a monster!) and Joan Collins (a personality!). In addition she regaled me with the account of a recent Hollywood barbecue where she met Stephen Spielberg. She praised him as *charmant* and—than which there is no greater French compliment—*simple* (the opposite of *compliqué*).

Josette sent me away with all the felt I need—free of charge.

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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

This may interest readers of *Cosmopolis* and the VIE:

Space Adventures Unveils the *Cosmopolis XXI*,
First Spacecraft Aimed at Tourism Trade
[http://www.space.com/missionlaunches/
cosmopolis_debut_020314.html](http://www.space.com/missionlaunches/cosmopolis_debut_020314.html)

Space Adventures, Ltd. today announced the debut of the *Cosmopolis XXI* Aerospace System (C-21), a next-generation spacecraft designed specifically for sub-orbital space tourist flights. The full-scale model of the reusable launch vehicle (RLV) was unveiled at the Zhukovsky Air Base outside of Moscow, Russia.

John Chalmers

* * *

To the Editor,

Our famous *Cosmopolis* controversy seems to be winding down, if the generally mellow and good-humored tone of *Cosmopolis 24* letters are any indication! I want to thank David G.D. Hecht for his loyal stance; he seems to understand these matters better than I do. Speaking of the 'pro' camp, we did not hear from the staunch Bob Lacovara last month, doubtlessly because he has been embroiled in *re*-correcting *The Moon Moth*, a sad story he can tell best. As for neutrals, thanks to Malcolm Bowers for making me laugh. Regarding Alain Schremmer, I fail to see how he can cry 'discrimination'; his name *did not* appear in italics, a clear sign! As for reading books, let alone commenting on them, since the VIE got started my reading time has all but evaporated. Such is the price of the pleasure and privilege of our collaborative efforts. I'll try to learn to read again, after the VIE is published.

In response to the noble confession of Kelly Hughes, I will disclose that I do not 'work side by side' with Mr. Vance. Our relationship, such as it is, began with a correspondence, quite occasional, starting sometime in the 1970's. I first met the Vances personally only in 1996, and since have had a few visits with them, once in France, and a couple of times in Oakland. I trust this is not a close enough association for my cooties to rub off on poor Jack (to say nothing of the extra-VIE obscurity of my person). But even if they did, it would be

nuncupatory; Vance is already a designated 'conservative reactionary'. As for Ed's point, I agree completely: Christianity, except for the well- and less well-known examples, is notably absent in an *oeuvre* which often speaks of religion. Vance has never attacked Mary, Jesus, Peter, Paul or Benedict. Meanwhile, all over the world, Christians are also, like Vance, struggling against idolatry and false religions, while offering Charity, Knowledge and Truth, and often being massacred for it to general indifference.

Vance has his own ideas, God bless him. My ideas are the following: either Jesus is the only son of God, who died on the cross for us, was resurrected, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. . . or he is, was and will not. People who have never studied the question seriously (Till comes to mind) have no more business opining on it than those who have never looked out at the horizon or up at the sun have any business opining upon the flatness of the Earth.

Speaking of Till, I would like to thank him for his defense of our *Cosmopolis* wrangling, in particular for showing its relevance to Vance and the VIE. Regarding the jejune lucubrations quoted from *Parapsyche*—an early story mostly interesting for what it reveals about young Jack's thinking, half a century ago—it is the oldest heresy of all: Man declares himself the creator of God. I doubt that either Till *or* Jack (young or old) would take the next step, and claim that Man also created Man.

—So who did?

—No one 'created' him! He just 'evolved'.

—From where and what?

—From mindless 'matter' and 'force'.

—Which come from . . . where?

—They do not 'come from' anywhere; they 'just are'.

—How do you know?

—No other answer is conceivable!

Naturally not! to the crabbed cynical-chemist mentality so many are eager to emulate. However, as the work of Jack Vance abundantly attests, appearances can be deceiving, and morality, including intellectual honesty, is not infinitely flexible.

Till admirably presents the following bit of folk 'wisdom': *Anybody who tells you that they know the truth is either a fool or trying to sell you something—or both.* At minimum this means the truth is unknowable; but in this case, like definitively lost money it might as

well not exist. On the other hand it is apparently not so inaccessible as that; this bit of 'wisdom' does not disqualify *itself* as a truth-saying statement, to whatever modest extent—but is it even modest? Does it not silently—if none-the-less arrogantly—disqualify any wisdom higher than itself?

Paul Rhoads

* * *

To the Editor,

To read or not to read . . .

First, I would like to thank the Editor as the pie he ate for lack of italics truly was awesome. Made me feel guilty.

Second, those requesting/demanding that *Cosmopolis* henceforth stay away from politics and/or religion ought to explain *why*. Yes, yes, I know. It wastes paper better used to talk about Vance. *Paper?* Is there indeed a long backlog of pieces on Vance due to all these digressions? Since there is no shortage of electrons, I would think not, and so, perhaps, *they* could see their way to write about what interests them, at the same time permitting me to read Rhoads et al. I would gladly read them—should it interest me.

OK. So this is not about any waste of *paper*. Perhaps readers like Mark Paulin like their reading to be organized in a 'tidy' manner: mornings, politics in the NY Times, or Figaro, or Time, or whatever (Disclosure: I prefer *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *The London Review of Books* and *La Republica*.); evenings, religion in _____ (please fill in the blank as I am not qualified); and Sundays, Vance in *Cosmopolis*. (Disclosure: I wish they would talk about Vance in *any* of the above even at the risk of literary disorder and possible miscegenation.)

Then there is the troubling question: Do they *really* read those letters they want to be banned away from their sight? (*Cachez ce sin que je ne saurai voir.*) And, if so, aren't we talking either hypocrisy or masochism? (Disclosure: I don't read half of the letters in *Cosmopolis*.) So, in the name of *what* do they want to prevent me to write what I want and which of course I authorize them not to read. And to read what *I* want. I apologize for writing such trivialities.

On the other hand, these readers certainly lack a minimum of, if not courtesy, at least gratitude: Imagine that Rhoads had invited us for dinner at his home; would these distinguished readers insist on dictating the topics of the conversation at his table? Rhoads is clearly obsessed with religion and politics (in the broadest sense) and the least we can do is to give him the pleasure of arguing with us on these topics, if only to give him that of *nous écrabouiller*. Speaking of which, he hasn't flattened non-libertarian thinking in a while. (Unless he hid it in the midst of his long letter on religion . . . which I only skimmed.) Should I write some more about, if not socialism, then anarchism which is as close to my heart as Christianity is to his.

Last, but absolutely not least, and this has nothing to do with the above, literary criticism can—occasionally—do either one or two things: it can be a pleasure in itself to read someone else enjoying the same books as we do—and validating to boot if we happen to think highly of the someone else, but it can also add another dimension to our own enjoyment. I just read Rhoads' *Winged Being Plucked Fruit from the Tree of Life* in Jack Vance, *Critical Appreciation and a Bibliography*, edited by A.E. Cunningham, and I must say that, even though I have been reading Vance since 1965, Rhoads' piece was a discovery of Vance whom I will now reread—for the umpteenth time, Rhoads piece in hand. I will say that I could do *without* some of Rhoads' occasional sideswipes but it is a very small price to pay for the insights he shares. I wondered though *why* I should find them annoying. I think that it is *not* because of what he actually says but because of his way of advancing it as a self-evident open and shut case, of marking me as an insufferable fool should I even wish to consider the matter, let alone request grounds for such abrupt dismissals. However, I am not presuming to tell Rhoads how/what to write and I am just saying this in the unlikely case he didn't mean to have that effect on his readers.

Alain Schremmer

P.S. I still, *really*, want to send Sen's *Inequality Re-examined* to Rhoads. I just don't know how. And as to *property*, I would like to suggest that he look up the April issue of *Scientific American*.

* * *

To the Editor,

This short missive is to 1) offer a brief answer to a question posed by Mark Paulin in *Cosmopolis* 24, 2) make an observation on a related topic, and 3) share some Vance-isms that have become regular visitors in our household discourse.

In considering some of the dialogue ('bickering') that has appeared in *Cosmopolis*, Mr. Paulin comments, "What, I ask, has this to do with the VIE?" It's a valid question. And my answer would start with the idea that the VIE has attracted imaginative, articulate people who derive great enjoyment from meaningful discussion about important topics. (I expect many Vance readers fall into that category.) Such people are not likely to easily accept linear restraints on their mental processes; and are likely to enjoy the challenge and potential for growth that comes from energetic discourse with others of intellectual ability.

The VIE is a big project, being done by an all-volunteer team, many of whom have accepted Herculean work loads. If the opportunity to participate in an interesting and energetic forum of ideas is motivational, then I would say part of the answer to Mr. Paulin's question is that the dialogue is a reasonable and zero-cost fringe benefit for some people who have probably earned one.

Another part of the answer might be that working with Jack Vance's writing has had the effect of stimulating thought and expression among the group. Even if the topics are a bit far afield, I would guess that Jack Vance would be quite pleased that, even indirectly, he has inspired yet more intellectual activity.

My 'observation on a related topic' is that I find the writing quality of these letters to be exceptional, and quite frankly, I enjoy reading them. Paul Rhoads and Till Noever are first-rate wordsmiths—as are many others who have contributed letters—in a world where literary elegance seems to be on a constant decline. *Cosmopolis* isn't a sacred tract, or a technical manual, or a consulting proposal. It's a project newsletter, whose direct purpose may be project status reporting and project management, but whose additional purpose is to help a geographically-dispersed team to work together. Anything that allows people to get to know each other better, and enjoy what they're doing more, is likely to have a beneficial effect on the team's success. And occasionally Paul and/or Till says

something I actually agree with—and that's just gravy.

Finally, a few of the Vance-inspired phrases which have passed into regular usage in our house:

When we're doing living room rock'n'roll (I play bad guitar, and my wife plays bad piano): "The tune was recognizable in rough outline, though often we have heard it played correctly."

When dubious execution ruins an otherwise good idea: "But the concept was sound."

When we're looking for some—any—common ground to end an argument: "On this, at least, I am sure we can agree."

When adequate explanation has finally been obtained: "All is now clear."

Admonition to our cats, Twisk and Dash, when their disposition is lacking: "Surly cats must make do with bread and water."

When a solution is finally found: "And all problems are thereby resolved."

When explaining to my wife what I expect in return after having served her an entrée of my scrumptious mesquite-grilled salmon: "Fish at Carl's Antler is very dear, as it is prepared by secret recipe."

Carl Goldman

* * *

To the Editor,

So, Paul has finally, maybe foolishly, gone where he has, so far, not gone before. I suppose he did it as a verbal side-swipe at me and others of my disposition, and maybe I can even follow his logic—if any such there is—that prompted him into presuming that he is anything but completely ignorant about what I—or anybody else who hasn't come to the same conclusions as he about life, the universe, and everything—have or have not considered seriously during the course of our lives. I suspect he reasoned it out to himself in the usual way of the fervent: "If he/she/they *had* considered my religion/ideology 'seriously', they would have adopted it." By the same reasoning—if we follow Paul—nobody who does not agree with the tenets of

a religion is entitled to 'opine' about it; if for no other reason but that s/he has never seriously thought about it. A nice, closed system of thinking, which seems to work for those locked into it. It does an excellent job of *defining* what constitutes 'serious consideration'. Well, so be it. Fervents will continue to be born—or made—and, to paraphrase my friend Malcolm, 'there's no helping it'. All part of the scintillating spectrum of life.

As to Paul's dismissal of Jack's pronouncements in *Parapsyche* as 'jejune lucubrations', to be relegated to oblivion and dismissed as irrelevant on the grounds that they represent 'young Jack's thinking'—which presumably is inferior to 'Paul's mature thinking'—I'd like to submit that the clarity of thinking of the young often—maybe even 'usually'—exceeds that of the 'old', whose 'maturity' would often more correctly be labelled 'sclerosis'; and in whom what once was 'opinion', to be critically evaluated and weighed, has finally congealed into 'certainty', thus locking their brains into certain unalterable neural patterns that can be disrupted only by the complete cessation of cerebral activity—a.k.a. 'death'. A sad fate, to be sure, and one I wouldn't wish on anybody.

Yet, despite all this, I detect a gem in Paul's letter; a pearl lost in his other polemic: *My ideas are the following: either Jesus is the only son of God, who died on the cross for us, was resurrected, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. . . or he is, was and will not.* Exactly. For here lies the crux of the entire issue: 'faith'. But faith has nothing to do with 'truth'—but merely with personal decision-making about *accepting* this or that as being 'true', no matter what evidence to the pro or con may or may not exist. Indeed, faith turns all evidence *against* into evidence *for* its tenets: this is its essential nature. The likes of me, who do not possess it—at least not the kind religions demand or provide—are neither blessed with nor shackled by the constraints a faith would impose on us. This makes us at the same time unable to truly 'understand' the faith of the fervent—*any* fervent—and thereby partake in the 'truth' that is contained in any given system of 'faith'. Yet at the same time it gives us a freedom to think and explore avenues of truth which *they* in turn lack, because they have forever excluded them from their lives.

Come to think about it: this is the essence of 'choice and consequence'. Which reminds me of an Egvene al'Vere dictum: "Do what you must, then pay the price for it. It is refusal to admit the debt, refusal to pay, that often turns necessity to evil." Paul must live with the consequences of his choices, and I with

mine. This is as it should be. That two such diverse characters should unite and cooperate—and, dare I say it? respect each other, despite our obvious differences—after being brought together by the VIE, surely tells us a lot about the enterprise and the man at its focus.

*Kindest Regards,
Till Noever*

P.S. By the way, thank you, Carl, for providing the most ego-boosting comment anybody has *ever* issued in this magazine! Needless to say, I agree with every word you wrote! How could I not?

CLS 12

The first Cosmopolis Literary Supplement under the new editor/composer team of Till Noever and Andreas Björklind is about to hit the stands, in conjunction with this issue of Cosmopolis. I want to thank Andreas for his diligent effort to get the CLS into a pleasing format. It's possible that we haven't got it *quite* right yet, but give us time and we'll make it perfect.

Featured in CLS 12 are the final installments of *The Zael Inheritance* and *Tergan*, as well as short stories by Malcolm Bowers of Dunedin, New Zealand, and Jeremy Cavaterra of somewhere in the US (he hasn't revealed as yet just exactly *where* he lives, and so I just *think* it's the US. . .), as well as the first-ever published Letter to the Editor, by none other than the redoubtable Alain Schremmer. Needless to say I hope there will be more to come. Enjoy.

Till Noever

Closing Words

Thanks to Suan Yong for composition and to proofreaders Carina Björklind, Till Noever, and Jim Pattison.

COSMOPOLIS SUBMISSIONS: when preparing articles for Cosmopolis, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send raw text. For Cosmopolis 26, please submit articles and Letters to the Editor to Derek Benson or Nita Benson: benson@online.no. Deadline for submissions is April 25.

Derek W. Benson, Editor

The Fine Print

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VIE Contacts

The VIE web page:

www.vanceintegral.com

For questions regarding subscription:

subscribe@vanceintegral.com

To volunteer on the project:

volunteer@vanceintegral.com

Paul Rhoads, Editor-in-Chief:

prhoads@club-internet.fr

R. C. Lacovara, 2nd-in-Command:

Lacovara@vanceintegral.com

Joel Riedesel, Work Flow Commissar:

jriedesel@jnana.com

Suan Yong, Process Integrity:

suan@cs.wisc.edu

Damien Jones, Double-Digitizing:

dagjo@pacbell.net

Ron Chernich, Techno-Proofing:

chernich@dstc.edu.au

Alun Hughes, Textual Editor-in-Chief:

alun.hughes@btinternet.com

Steve Sherman, Textual Integrity Administration:

Steve.Sherman@compaq.com

John Foley, Composition:

beowulf@post.lucent.com

Christian J. Corley, Post-Proofing:

cjc@vignette.com

John Schwab, Archivist:

jschwab@dslnorthwest.net

Hans van der Veeke, Volunteer Ombudsman:

hans@vie.tmfweb.nl

Derek Benson, Cosmopolis Editor:

benson@online.no